

Palestinian 'informer' killed

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Palestinian activist in the occupied West Bank killed a suspected Arab informant for Israel Friday at residents of the Gaza Strip observed a general strike. The informant, an Israeli army spokesman said, was killed by a Palestinian militant. The informant was a 35-year-old man, identified as Ahmad al-Husseini, who had been working for the Israeli army for several years. He was killed by a Palestinian militant who shot him in the head. The informant was a member of the Fatah organization. The informant was a member of the Fatah organization. The informant was a member of the Fatah organization.

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EC to hold summit on Germans

DUBLIN (R) — The European Community (EC) said Friday it would hold a special summit in April to discuss problems of German unification. The Irish government, which currently holds the EC presidency, said the talks would probably take place in the third week of April though no final date had been set.

Israel to open office in China

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel said on Friday it would soon open an academic institute in Beijing in an important step towards establishing diplomatic ties with China. "This is definitely a step in the right direction, both sides felt it was high time Israel established a semi-official representation to channel our contacts," foreign ministry director-general Reuven Merhav told reporters. Five Israeli scientists are expected to staff the Israeli academy of science and humanities office in Beijing, which Merhav said would be Israel's first representation in China.

Sudan rebels claim capture of 3 towns

NAIROBI (AP) — Rebels said Friday they had overrun three more government garrisons in southern Sudan and beaten back a military convoy trying to come to the rescue of one. In a clandestine radio broadcast, the Sudan People's Liberation Army said it captured Kologi in southern Kordofan province "after seven days of heavy fighting preceded by a one-month siege." The broadcast said rebel forces also ambushed a 32-vehicle convoy, including four tanks, that was trying to reach Kologi and "forced it to retreat with heavy losses." The rebels also claimed the capture of two smaller garrison towns, Bazia on Jan. 24 and Amati Wednesday. The report could not be independently confirmed.

Mutilated corpses found in Azerbaijan

MOSCOW (R) — Twelve mutilated corpses, 11 of them Armenians from a home for invalids, have been found in a sand pit in Soviet Azerbaijan, the official news agency TASS said on Friday. TASS did not say who was suspected of the killings. But the corpses — 11 women and one man — appeared to be victims of an ethnic conflict between Armenians and Azeris which has killed hundreds over the past two years. Eleven were identified as handicapped Armenians who disappeared from a home for invalids in the Azerbaijan city of Gyandzha on Jan. 24, TASS said. It did not identify the other victim.

Swedish politics in disarray

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Finance Minister Kjell-Olof Feldt resigned Friday from the day-old caretaker cabinet, one day after the government resigned when his economic austerity package was defeated in parliament. Feldt's resignation appeared to be an attempt by the Social Democrats, the former governing party, to regroup, regain public confidence and build political support to form a new government. On Thursday, Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson submitted the government's resignation, setting off a political crisis, after parliament rejected the economic austerity measures proposed by the widely respected Feldt. Carlsson announced that Feldt's deputy and budget director, Odd Engstrom, would fill the finance minister's post in the caretaker government.

Kenyan minister found dead

NAIROBI (AP) — The partly burned body of Foreign Minister Robert Ouko was found Friday near his western Kenya home three days after his mysterious disappearance. The government indicated he had been murdered. The discovery of Ouko's body was announced by President Daniel Arap Moi, who said it was found "in circumstances which at the moment suggest foul play." The body of the 58-year-old minister was found in a sugar cane field about 6 kilometers from his family farm in Kori, not far from Lake Victoria.

King pardons 29 political prisoners

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday ordered the government to release 29 convicted political prisoners in a continuing drive towards political liberalisation.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the King ordered the prisoners "release immediately." Twenty-seven are Jordanians and two are foreigners, it said. The King ordered the release of the prisoners "so that they can return to their society and contribute to building the homeland and participate in serious and responsible work," Petra said.

An Interior Ministry official, speaking to the AP on condition of anonymity, said the decree covered prisoners who had already served at least half of sentences ranging from 10 to 15 years. They included prisoners convicted of arms smuggling and other offenses, as well as membership in banned organisations. The official said their release papers were being processed.

The official indicated that another 40 political-related prisoners remained behind bars, and their cases were being studied for a possible amnesty. Some were convicted of bombings or attempted assassinations.

The latest release occurred on Dec. 2, when the government freed 48 political activists who had been detained but not convicted.

The new government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran has already repealed a 37-year-old anti-communism law and has announced plans to repeal the 25-year-old martial law and a 55-year-old defence law.

Petra listed the Jordanians ordered released Friday as under: Husam Ahmad Hussein Al Aqarbi, Hassan Ali Mahmoud Al Karaz, Usama Mustafa Zaid Al Nabulsi, Raed Mohammad Asad Al Zou'bi, Nazih Yousef Ibrahim Al Desouqi, Abdul Hakim Yousef Mahmoud Rayyan, Hassan Mohammad Ajjaj Obaidat, Mousa Mohammad Mousa Abdulrahman, Ahmad Arabi Yassin Ahmad Al Khalayleh, Riyadh Ahmad Abdullah Suleiman, Ahmad Hammad Musa Al Nneilat, Yousef Ahmad Saleh Ibrahim, Ibrahim Jamil Ahmad Abdullah, Wasef Abdul Rahman Mahmoud, Ibrahim Ousem Suleiman Al Khawaleh, Kamal Khalil Saleh Ibrahim, Hassan Ali Mohammad Shashin, Hussein Ahmad Fahd Al Sarhan, Nayef Yousef Abdul Ghani Al Hassanat, Thamer Shamer Shukr

Khan, Hassan Mohammad Hussein Al Ali, Khamis Abdul Oader Mohammad Rizq, Yousef Yagoub Mohammad Al Kalawi, Ibrahim Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Jarad, Jamil Shaker Hussein Al Mousa, Mohammad Khatib Mustafa Mussad, and Ahmad Hilal Id Al Dawayneh. The two non-Jordanians ordered freed were not identified.

The decree followed the King's return Thursday night from a visit from Saudi Arabia. During the three-day visit, the King held talks with King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz on bilateral relations and regional and international affairs.

Petra said that the two leaders reaffirmed the need for a unified stand in the face of the developments in the region. On his way back to Amman, the King visited Medina where he prayed at the Prophet Mohammad Mosque. King Hussein was accompanied on the visit by Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and his Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh.

Message to Arafat
It was announced Thursday night that King Hussein had sent a message to Palestine President



HM King Hussein
Yasser Arafat on current coordination to unify Arab efforts in the face of the common challenges.

The message was delivered by Deputy Prime Minister Marwan Al Qasem, who said in a statement later that he reviewed with Arafat current developments in the occupied Arab territories.

Arafat said later that he discussed the influx of Soviet Jewish immigrants to Palestine which will be tackled by the leaders of Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) countries and a future Arab summit meeting. Qasem will also take part in a meeting to prepare the agenda for ACC summit later this month, which will include the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration to Palestine.

The two-day ACC summit is scheduled to be held in Amman Feb. 24 during which the ACC leaders will sign agreements in various fields of economic cooperation.

Qasem addresses Baghdad celebration

'ACC represents determination to achieve unity'

BAGHDAD (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem said Friday that the creation of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) was a practical translation of the aspirations and determination of the peoples of the four founding countries to achieve the long-sought Arab unity at a time when the world is witnessing dramatic developments and changes.

Delivering a speech on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein at a major celebration held to mark the first anniversary of the ACC, Qasem said that the "changing international environment has served as an opportunity to activate the Arab Order."

"The state of mutual reliance characterising the international order does not allow for singularity or isolation, and the creation of economic blocs warrants that our nation rearranges its house and prepares itself for negotiating with other world blocs," he said. "There is no room on our planet for small, dispersed weak entities since such entities can not provide the requirements of security, freedom and economic prosperity for their citizens, let alone maintain their independence and sovereignty and even their existence," Qasem said. "The creation of the ACC was not a reaction to world events even though the developments taking place in our sphere have contributed to its formation," he added.

Qasem stressed that "our meeting today should not serve as an occasion for celebrating the declaration of the ACC, but rather as an invitation for evaluating and assessing its one-year march."

Qasem called for bolstering cooperation and coordination among the ACC member states to counter the challenges facing the Arab Nation and threatening the Arab Order. He summarised these challenges as: Iran's hesitation to accept the calls for peace by Iraq, Israel's intransigence and its denial of the rights of the Palestinian people and Jewish immigration to Palestine from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

On the eastern flank of the Arab World, Qasem said, Iran is still hesitant over peace with Iraq. "A strong and influential Arab gathering will serve as a positive means for convincing Iran of the importance of capitalising on the peace initiative made by Iraq," he said.

On the Western flank, Qasem said, Jordan is on the longest confrontation line with Israel, which still refuses to recognise the legitimate Palestinian rights, including the rights to self-determination and to establish an independent state. "Such intransigence on the part of Israel cannot be countered except through an influential and effective Arab entity," he said.

Israel seeks to weaken the Arab World and to contain the Arab Order in preparation for dominating it, he said. "Despite the continuing Palestinian uprising and our full support for it, and the positive stand of the Palestine

(Continued on page 3)

Geagea fighters hospitalised in west Beirut

Aoun forces pound hospital, orphanage in frenzied battles

BEIRUT (AP) — Soldiers of maverick General Michel Aoun shelled a French-financed hospital and an orphanage Friday as his troops maintained a relentless barrage on isolated pockets of the rival militia in east Beirut.

The administrators of the Hotel Dieu hospital, which took 20 direct hits, and the Notre Dame Orphanage appealed to the combatants to stop hitting them or they would be forced to shut.

The command of Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces (LF) militia accused Aoun's gunners of using U.S.-made 155 millimetre howitzers and incendiary shells in "their criminal" bombardment of "Ain Roumaneh and the militia's two other pockets of Ashrafieh and Nabaa in east Beirut." The artillery barrage of the three Geagea strongholds followed a 36-tank and about 900 soldiers Thursday that took a chain of buildings around 'Ain Roumaneh. Police said 20 people were killed and 54 wounded in the attack.

By police count, the 17-day savage power struggle for control over the 800-square-kilometre predominantly Christian enclave has killed 554 people and wounded 1,829.

A police spokesman said Aoun's command units were "milling" through 'Ain Roumaneh Friday behind a fierce curtain of howitzer and mortar fire.

The spokesman said Geagea's militia in 'Ain Roumaneh was "in a very difficult position."

Aoun's command in a communique Friday said 'Ain Roumaneh had fallen, but mopping up operations "against the gunners' few remaining pockets of resistance" were continuing.

It said Geagea's gunners were trying to ease the pressure on 'Ain Roumaneh by pounding Aoun's supply lines in districts in east Beirut from multi-barrelled rocket launchers deployed in the Kesrouwan hinterland north of the capital.

The fighting Thursday also stripped the Lebanese Forces of its main clinic, said the spokesman.

He said this pushed the Lebanese Forces to conclude a deal with the mainstream Shi'ite Amal militia to evacuate casualties from 'Ain Roumaneh to the neighbouring district of Shiyah, across the no-man's-land of Beirut's dividing green line.

Witnesses, speaking on condition of anonymity, reported seeing at least two wounded Lebanese Forces militiamen carried on stretchers to Shiyah and evacuated by Amal ambulances to the American University Hospital.

This raised to 17 the number of wounded Geagea militiamen hospitalised in west Beirut, poised by Syrians.

AUH spokesman Radwan Mawlawi refused to confirm or deny the presence of Christian militiamen at the hospital.

However, hospital staffers, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that the militiamen were admitted as of late Thursday.

One medical staffer said at least four of them were in critical condition and operated on.

Observers said Amal was "returning a favour" to the Lebanese Forces which helped evacuate and hospitalise trapped Shi'ite militiamen from Shiyah during a confrontation with Palestinian guerrillas in 1982.

One witness said Amal and Lebanese Forces militiamen hold conversations across the narrow, mined street that separates their positions.

The French director of Hotel Dieu Hospital, Alain Tessier, said in a statement that "every vital facility in the hospital has been hit. We cannot continue offering serious service."

The police spokesman said the three-storey hospital on the edge of Ashrafieh took at least 20 direct hits Friday from howitzers operated by Aoun's gunners.

Aoun's artillery emplacements, targeting another stronghold of the Lebanese Forces, also hit the mountaintop Notre Dame Orphanage in Harissa, north of Beirut.

The orphanage called on relatives to evacuate the orphans "as soon as possible because we cannot continue providing them with our services."

Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Steir held a two-hour meeting with Aoun at the general's headquarters in Baabda, apparently in an effort to work out a settlement between Aoun and Geagea.

No statement was made after the meeting, the latest in a series of ill-fated efforts by Steir (Christian) to end the fighting, page 2).

Single exchange rate goes into effect

AMMAN (J.T.) — A unified exchange rate for all foreign currencies goes into effect as of today in line with a decision announced by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

In a memorandum sent Thursday to commercial banks and licensed financial institutions, the CBJ said the move was in implementation of its declared aim of achieving a stable rate of exchange for the Jordanian dinar.

The CBJ set its selling rate for the American dollar at 671/673 fils to commercial banks and licensed financial institutions with the stipulation that the resale value of the dollar remained under a ceiling of 675 fils without commission.

The CBJ move eliminated a two-tier foreign exchange system which was launched by the bank in August last year. While the first tier applied for imports of essential goods and certain types of medicines specified by the government and payment of fees for Jordanian students abroad, the second tier covered all other transactions in foreign currency, including imports of goods not included in the government list.

UNHRC urges Israel to refrain from settlement

GENEVA (R) — The United Nations called on Israel Friday to refrain from settling immigrants in the occupied territories. The U.N. Human Rights Commission (UNHRC), in a resolution passed by 42 votes to zero, also said Israel's entire settlement policy for the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights was illegal.

The United States abstained in the vote but described settlements as "an obstacle to peace."

European Community (EC) and other states introduced the resolution after Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said last month that a "big Israel" was needed to accommodate the expected flood of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union.

The commission said it was "seriously concerned at the recent suggestions that immigrants to Israel may be settled in the occupied territories."

It called on the government "to refrain from settling immigrants in the occupied territories."

Palestinians have expressed alarm that new settlements will make it more difficult to recover the territories in the long term. They also say new settlements compete with Palestinians for scarce resources like ground water.

The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, drawn up to protect civilians from the effects of war, specifically prohibits occupying powers from transferring people into territory it was seized.

The commission resolution said: "The settling of Israeli civilians in the occupied territories is illegal and contravenes the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention."

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which monitors implementation of the Geneva Conventions, also said Tuesday that the settlements were illegal.

U.S. Ambassador Morris Abram said his government disagreed with the way certain parts of the resolution were phrased, but he added: "We believe that settlements are an obstacle to peace. We believe that putting more settlers in these areas, particularly at this time, works against the cause of peace."

The commission passed other resolutions, similar to ones approved in past annual sessions, "strongly condemning" the continued occupation as well as a long list of human rights violations from torture to expulsions.

ANC to send delegation for talks with de Klerk

LUSAKA (Agencies) — In a major breakthrough, the exiled leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) said Friday it would send a delegation to South Africa for a meeting with President F.W. de Klerk.

The ANC delegation would be prepared to "negotiate a suspension of hostilities until a climate conducive to negotiations has been created," according to a statement read at a news conference by ANC Secretary-General Alfred Nzo.

There was no immediate comment from de Klerk's office.

ANC leaders declared three days of strategy talks, called after de Klerk freed their leader Nelson Mandela from 27 years' jail last Sunday.

after decades in jail, South Africa's main black nationalist movement has been left with two sets of leaders in South Africa and Zambia.

Mandela said after his release he was a disciplined member of the ANC and would be guided by its rulings, ending speculation that he might use his status to go his own way.

It would be the first meeting between the guerrilla movement's exiled leaders and a South African head of state. No date for the meeting was announced, but Nzo said he hoped the meeting with de Klerk would be "as soon as possible."

The ANC also said it would

Controversial 'apostasy' case resurfaces in appeals court

Controversial 'apostasy' case resurfaces in appeals court

By Ghadeer Taber
Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — An "apostasy" case which sparked a fierce debate in the run-up to the Nov. 8 parliamentary elections but was dismissed by a religious court has been revived and brought to court again, this time by the lawyer of the two original plaintiffs.

The case against Toujan Faisal, a former television personality and an unsuccessful candidate in the elections, was heard in a closed session at the Sharia appeals court Thursday. Lawyers said the final verdict was expected to be issued Wednesday.

The original case, filed in

October by Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al Kurdi, a mufti in the Armed Forces, and Mutaseem Faris, a private in the Armed Forces, was turned down five days before the elections by the Amman Sharia (Islamic law) court on grounds that it was beyond the court's jurisdiction.

Subsequently, the two plaintiffs withdrew from the case, but their lawyer is appealing the case on the basis that the original lawsuit was filed on behalf of "public right."

"The fact that the original petitioners withdrew from the case does not mean the case is finished," said lawyer Abdullah

Shamayleh "the case was not in their name; it was in the name of public right so anyone can pursue the case," Shamayleh told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview Friday. He claimed that "certain groups in the Armed Forces" had forced the two original plaintiffs to withdraw from the case.

When the case surfaced in October, many activities described it as an attempt by religious extremists to "stifle the women's movement in Jordan at a time when women were running in the elections for the first time in the Kingdom's history." The Muslim Brotherhood adopted a neutral posture in the case.

According to Shamayleh, "we have nothing against (Faisal) personally but her views are wrong and harmful to people."

The first case was based on an argument that some of Faisal's writings in the local newspapers "challenged the Prophet Mohammad's sayings." The original suit demanded that Faisal, a mother of three, be found guilty of apostasy and be detained, her marriage be dissolved, her "repentance" be turned down if she made one, all her rights be denied and all her writings be banned and all those who shed her blood be given immunity.

During Thursday's court session, according to Shamayleh,

Faisal accused the lawyer and unnamed others who support the case against her as harbouring political motivations against her rather than religious sentiments. But, Shamayleh said, "we did not raise this case in order to keep her out of Parliament as she claims. We did it because she slandered the sayings of the Prophet in many of her articles."

The lawyer said kurdi had approached him about the case before Faisal declared her candidacy. "I raised the petition Oct. 2," said Shamayleh, who submitted a 16-page appeal document to the court.

In an earlier interview with the Jordan Times, Faisal said the plaintiffs had specifically

referred to an article she wrote in Al Ra'i daily in September. She questioned why the plaintiffs had waited "until the elections and my candidacy to even raise the issue, particularly that I have been writing for a long time."

Shamayleh agrees that he took the case not just based on Faisal's September article. "People were beginning to listen to her misguided views on Islam because she was given a forum to air her views," Shamayleh said.

As the court heard the case Thursday, journalists, activists and professors gathered outside the buildings in a show of solidarity with Faisal.

According to Faisal, "there

were many people who wanted to come in to the session to show solidarity."

"I appreciated this very much." But she refused to discuss any detail of the court proceedings and pointed out that the session was closed to the public.

Faisal, who did not attend any court session of the first case saying she did not expect "fair treatment," said Thursday's court proceedings were "decent and fair."

According to a university professor who was among those gathered outside the court Thursday, "I came because I think it is an important issue which could threaten the fabric of our society."

Afghans still far from peace a year after Soviet pullout

By Jose Katigbak
Reuters

KABUL — A year after Soviet troops pulled out of Afghanistan, peace for the battered country of 18 million people remains as elusive as ever.

Defying the predictions of Western analysts, President Najibullah has strengthened his grip on power since the last of the Soviet soldiers supporting him left the country on Feb. 15 last year.

But the war against U.S.-backed Afghan rebels rages on, leaving the economy in tatters and frustrating any effort to repair the devastation caused by 11 years of fighting.

"I am not optimistic the war will end soon even if the superpowers agree to stop supplying arms to the belligerents," said one foreign diplomat in Kabul.

Diplomats say neither side is strong enough to win on the battlefield.

The government has remained on the defensive since the Soviet pullout, battling to protect key towns from rebel attacks. But the rebels, attempting to switch from guerrilla tactics to conventional warfare, have suffered major setbacks.

"Under the present correlation of forces, the government cannot be beaten militarily," another diplomat said.

Kabul has repeatedly proposed a ceasefire, United Nations-supervised elections and the demilitarisation of Afghanistan as the only way to end the conflict.

But the rebels have publicly refused to negotiate with a government that they hold responsible for the deaths of more than

one million people and the exile of five million others.

Najibullah renewed his offer to a truce Wednesday in a televised address to mark the first anniversary of the Soviet pullout.

The rebels fired five rockets at Kabul Thursday in an apparent rejection of the proposal.

Najibullah's offer coincided with a call by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze for the demilitarisation of Afghanistan and a four power peace conference.

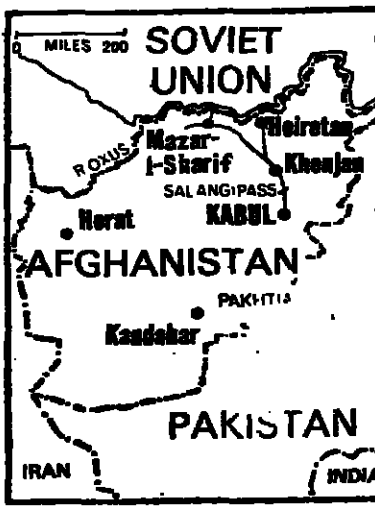
Shevardnadze also proposed a halt to all arms supplies to Afghanistan and a ceasefire followed by the removal of all arms stocks from the country.

An Afghan journalist, who asked not to be identified, said the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan had sown seeds of discord that were plaguing the country. "It will be a difficult task to reconcile," the two sides, the journalist said.

The war is fuelled by extensive military aid to the government from the Soviet Union, which entered Afghanistan in 1979 to prop up the faltering Marxist government, and to the rebels from the United States.

Despite improving relations between Moscow and Washington, Afghan government spokesman Mohammad Najib said recently that the superpowers remained far from agreement on the conflict.

There is diplomatic consensus here that a deal between Moscow and Washington to halt arms supplies would benefit Kabul in the short run or, as one diplomat put it, "until their missiles and air power run dry."



But even if arms supplies cease, both sides are believed to have enough weapons stockpiled to keep the war going at the same level for at least two years.

Few regret the departure of the Soviet forces.

Najib said there were no plans to commemorate the pullout because sending troops into Afghanistan was a mistake and "you don't celebrate mistakes."

The government is trying to win support by distancing itself from its Communist past. Once a staunch proponent of Marxism-Leninism, the ruling People Democratic Party of Afghanistan now claims to be Islamic, nationalist and pro-democracy.

Privately, government officials also agree that the coup which brought the Communists to power in 1978 was a mistake. "The timing was wrong because the people were not yet ready for socialism," a senior official said.

"Before the revolution every-

thing was cheap and in abundance," said one government employee. "Now we have no security, no peace, no food, no nothing."

In the big cities at least, there appears to be more food than last year because the winter has been relatively mild. And there have been fewer rebel interruptions of a key highway that is Kabul's main lifeline to the Soviet Union.

But in the countryside, United Nations officials report people are starving because of food shortages and a rapid decline in the purchasing power of the afghan.

The currency has plummeted to 500 to the U.S. dollar in the bazaars from 220 one year ago. The official rate is 55 afghanis to the dollar.

The average local salary is about 3,000 afghanis a month, good for 12 kilograms of rice or four kilograms of mutton in the free market.

Although state workers get coupons entitling them to 50 kilograms of rice and four kilograms of cooking oil every month, not all of them get their full quotas because of shortages.

They are also entitled to four kilograms of sugar, four bars of soap and 500 grammes of tea at subsidised prices.

In Kabul's main carpet and jewellery area, shopkeepers said business was awful. Some traders said the only good that could be said of the Soviet troops was that they had inspired Western diplomats, "our main buyers," to stay.

When the Soviet army withdrew, the diplomats, concerned about their safety, also packed their bags and left.

Kollek: Give up territories, concentrate on influx

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek urged Friday that Israel give up the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to concentrate on absorbing the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews expected to immigrate to Israel.

The absorption in human and material resources needed for the absorption of these immigrants is so vast that I maintain it is impossible to continue at the same time to occupy the West Bank and Gaza," the mayor said.

Kollek made the statement in an essay distributed by his office in reply to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's recent comment

that a "big Israel" was needed for the expected wave of immigration.

Shamir's statement on Jan. 15 set off accusations by both Arabs and Western countries that he wanted to annex the territories. Shamir has since said repeatedly that Israel was not pushing Soviet Jews onto occupied land.

The 78-year-old Kollek said he agreed a "greater Israel" was needed to settle the up to 300,000 Soviets who may come to Israel in the next three years because of more liberal Soviet policies and tighter U.S. visa rules.

But "my greater Israel is not measured in additional square

kilometres but rather in content and spirit," Kollek wrote in an essay first printed in the Hebrew daily Haaretz.

To absorb the wave of immigrants, Kollek said, Israel must quiet the 26-month Palestinian uprising against occupation and ensure financial aid from outside sources.

"We will not succeed if we insist on holding onto every inch of Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza... and if by doing so we cut ourselves off from those who would help us in absorbing the immigrants," Kollek wrote.

Kollek said he felt "deep apprehension" at the creation of

a Palestinian state next to Israel but added: "I am convinced that ruling over a million and a half Palestinians is even more dangerous."

To illustrate the dangers of trying to dominate other people, Kollek cited neighbouring Lebanon where the French expanded the Maronite Christian enclave in Mount Lebanon into "greater Lebanon" including Druze and Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

"The Maronites were unable to permanently rule a growing majority and after 50 years the country was torn apart," Kollek wrote. "Why cannot we learn? The example is so close."

Attorney general drops case against Weizman

TEL AVIV (AP) — Attorney General Yosef Harish said Thursday he was dropping an investigation into charges that a cabinet minister violated Israel's anti-terrorism law by meeting with PLO officials.

In January, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir accused Science Minister Ezer Weizman of meeting with PLO officials and forced him to quit the 12-member decision-making inner cabinet. It is unclear if Weizman will be readmitted to the cabinet.

Harish said he was ending his review of secret material gathered in a police investigation of Weizman's meetings because there was "no acceptable evidence" that the minister knowingly met with PLO officials.

An amendment to Israel's anti-terrorism law makes it illegal to knowingly hold unauthorized contacts with members or representatives of the PLO.

In a five-page official statement released by Harish, the attorney general stated that "There is no acceptable evidence... that Minister Weizman has committed any violations."

The statement also pointed out that Weizman has parliamentary

immunity from prosecution.

The statement said in an investigation led by Chief of Police David Krass revealed that Weizman had met with the PLO's representative in Geneva, Nabil Ramlawi, in June 1989. The statement also said that in November of that year Weizman held a telephone conversation with Dr. Ahmad Tibi, an Israeli Arab, who was visiting Tunis.

Shamir had accused Weizman of passing cabinet secrets to PLO leaders in Tunis during a telephone conversation.

Harish said Weizman had not violated the anti-terrorism law because he met Ramlawi by accident and did not know of his role in the PLO. He also said Weizman's telephone conversation with Tibi could not be considered illegal because Tibi is an Israeli citizen and not a member of PLO.

"I feel justice has been done," Weizman told the Associated Press. "I am very satisfied."

Weizman, 65, a former defence minister who defected to Labour from Shamir's Likud refused to comment when asked if he would demand to return to the inner cabinet.

Adults cry and curse, children fall sick during Beirut fighting

BEIRUT (R) — Children slept on damp mattresses coughing all night. Men and women collapsed shouting and cursing and then praying for their lives.

This was how some of more than half a million Lebanese spent almost two weeks in underground shelters to escape artillery battles between rival Christian forces fighting for leadership of the Christian heartland.

"Many children fell sick and coughed all night in the cold and humid basement," said Richard Habab, a Christian who fled to west Beirut from the east.

"Even many of the adults broke down and collapsed shouting and cursing. We calmed each other and prayed," he said.

Habab, his wife and three children and 30 other people crammed into one small shelter in Beirut's Ain Al Rummaneh residential area as troops of General Michel Aoun and Lebanese Forces militiamen traded rockets, mortars and tank fire outside.

"I used to sleep on a chair and my wife and our three children on a single mattress. They were shaking to the sound of the explosions... I used to tell the children

it was only fireworks and hunting of birds," Habab said.

More than 500 people were killed in the fighting which flared on Jan. 31 and quickly left the Christian enclave with little food, water or electricity.

Habab and his neighbours put buckets outside to collect rain water. They washed their hands every two days. On other days they used paper tissues to save water.

He said one woman suffered heart problems. On the sixth day, her daughter ventured out of their shelter and braved the artillery shelling to find medicine.

The neighbours occasionally told jokes to ease the tension.

The battles forced thousands of Christians to leave their enclave, seeking safer areas in Lebanon or, where possible, abroad. Many fled to west Beirut where their rival Muslims live.

Still pale and exhausted, Habab said more than 20 shells hit the building housing his flat on the first day of fighting.

His car caught fire, filling the shelter with smoke and dust, and

"...after the first day it was pointless to count the shells which hit the building."

His wife, Hala, 32, risked her life to climb the stairs to their flat to get some food for her family.

"It was an adventure to go up," she said.

Habab said one curious neighbour was hit in the stomach by shrapnel from an exploding shell when he peeked from the entrance of the shelter despite his friends' warnings.

On the 11th day of the constantly-shifting fighting, a neighbour told Habab he had found a safe way out of the area. "I went alone to explore the way and on the next day I accompanied my family."

"On our way out, we crossed very narrow streets and the biggest difficulty was our youngest child who was very scared from the bombing and the sight of the fires," he said.

"We walked between mine fields and came under sniper fire but after 45 minutes of walking we arrived to the safety of west Beirut and hugged each other because we were all safe and together."

Rafsanjani condemns uproar over Rushdie death order

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani Friday called the order to kill author Salman Rushdie an exclusively Islamic issue and condemned the uproar it sparked, Tehran Radio reported.

"The imam's sentence on the apostate writer of the Satanic Verses is an opinion of Islamic expertise and there is no need for the kind of ruckus that has been raised by the enemies of Islam," Rafsanjani said in a sermon.

Iransians Wednesday celebrated the first anniversary of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Feb. 14 ruling that Rushdie should be killed for writing the novel.

Khomeini, known by Iramians as the imam, declared the Muslim-born Rushdie an "apostate" and said he must die for his irreverent treatment of the Prophet Mohammed.

Rafsanjani is the leader of a so-called pragmatist camp, which wants to temper Iran's radical image.

Radical Iranian leaders, led by former Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, oppose Rafsanjani's policies and seek to preserve Iran's revolutionary purity.

While radical Iranian leaders have been trying to get media attention by highlighting the Rushdie affair for the past week, Rafsanjani appeared to be trying to play it down.

"If they (the West) deal with the issue logically, the result will be that the imam's sentence will be regarded as an issue of Islamic expertise, not anything else."

"If an expert offers his opinion about an issue, it should not need (to produce) such a scandal," the radio quoted Rafsanjani as saying in his sermon.

Shamir is cruel and dangerous, Sharon says

TEL AVIV (R) — Hardline Israeli politician Ariel Sharon has launched his bitterest attack yet on Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, calling him cruel and dangerous and saying he would one day take Shamir's place.

In an interview with the Yedioth Ahronoth daily published Friday, the 61-year-old architect of Israel's 1982 Lebanon invasion also admitted his misjudgment led to the slaughter of Palestinians by Christians in Lebanon's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

"Yitzhak Shamir is a dangerous man. I will never forgive Yitzhak Shamir for putting this nation to sleep," Sharon said in the interview published four days after he announced his resignation as trade minister.

"Yitzhak Shamir is definitely a cruel man," said the Husky Sharon, who has vowed to launch a one-man campaign against a government proposal for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations after he formally resigns at a weekly cabinet meeting Sunday.

The harsh adjectives to describe Shamir, 74, contrasted with Sharon's pledge to focus on issues rather than personalities in his battle.

Claiming victory over Shamir at a chaotic meeting last Monday at their rightist Likud Party, Sharon told the newspaper: "I still believe I will be prime minister of Israel."

Sharon admitted his misjudgment in the Lebanon war while defending his criticism of defence minister Yitzhak Rabin's failure to quash a 26-month-old Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

An Israeli judicial inquiry in 1983 found Sharon, then defence minister, was indirectly responsible for the slaughter of hundreds of Palestinians by Falangist militiamen at two Beirut area refugee camps surrounded by Israeli troops.

The inquiry forced him to resign the Defence Ministry.

"So I paid the heaviest price for not figuring the Christians would slaughter the Muslims. That was my indirect responsibility. But Rabin must pay for his direct responsibility for this big failure," Sharon told the newspaper.

"It annoys me that Rabin, when you remind him of his failure, he asks: 'And what happened in Lebanon?' So let's say Lebanon was a failure? Does one failure justify another? It would be more constructive to explain his own failure."

It was "interesting," Sharon said, that Shamir's office and the Palestine Liberation Organisation were happiest he was resigning from the cabinet. He said he would fight Shamir's government from outside the cabinet but inside the party.

To support his accusation that Shamir was cruel, Sharon cited the case of Jonathan Pollard.

Many Israeli rightwingers believe Pollard was a national hero for passing U.S. intelligence on Arab states that they think the United States should have provided anyway.

"Jonathan Pollard might have been saved from life imprisonment in the United States. Although I was not involved in the affair, I proposed Shamir do that," Sharon said.

Turkey urges Greece not to increase tension

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey has called on Greece to refrain from increasing tensions between the two countries and to halt "oppression" of the Muslim minority in western Thrace.

A Foreign Ministry statement accused outgoing Greek Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras of sending an "irresponsible" letter "full of baseless claims" to the leaders of the United Nations and NATO and the 35 countries which signed the Helsinki accords.

Samaras was replying to a letter sent to the same parties on Jan. 31 by Turkey's Foreign

Minister Mesut Yilmaz.

Yilmaz accused Greece of oppressing the Muslim minority. Samaras called the Turkish claim a fabrication.

The latest diplomatic row between the two long-fending Aegean neighbours started on Jan. 26 when a court in the northeastern Greek town of Komotini sentenced two local Muslim politicians to 18 months in prison each for using the word "Turkish" in their election campaign films.

Greece recognises only the religious identity of the 120,000-strong minority and has banned

any reference to ethnicity with a supreme court decision in 1987.

On Jan. 29 Christians in Komotini attacked Muslims protesting the prison sentences against Ahmet Sadik and Ibrahim Sherif. The windows of scores of shops belonging to the minority Muslims were broken.

In his letter, Samaras said that Turkey was guilty of discriminating against the Greek minority in Istanbul and that 16 Greeks had been killed in riots there in Sept. 1955.

Turkey denies there were any killings in the incidents.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

17:26 Maghreb

18:44 Tala

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran

15:45 Programme review

15:55 Children's programme

16:05 Educational programme

16:15 News summary

16:25 Message from Iraq

16:35 A play by Shakespeare

16:45 Local programme

16:55 Programme review

17:05 News in Arabic

17:15 Arabic series

17:25 Programme review

17:35 Consumer's Guide

17:45 Local programme

17:55 News in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

17:10 Champs Elysees

17:20 News in French

17:30 Documentary

17:40 News in Hebrew

17:50 Natural Phenomena

18:00 News in Arabic

18:10 "Voices from Gaza"

18:20 Classical Music

18:30 News in English

18:40 Feature film: "Nightmare of Bitterneck"

PRAYER TIMES

04:55 Fajr

06:13 (Sunrise) Dhuhr

11:50 Dhuhr

14:30 'Asr

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740

Assembly of God Church, Tel. 653785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrence's Church Tel. 622566

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625441

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 625453

American Catholic Church Tel. 713331

American Orthodox Church Tel. 775251

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

American International Church Tel. 653526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 653526

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 615817, 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be relatively warm and in the evening the northern parts of the Kingdom will be affected by a cold front that will extend gradually other parts

of the Kingdom. There a drop in temperature will occur and there will be a chance for scattered rain. Winds will be southerly moderate to fresh. In Amman, winds will be southerly moderate and sea calm.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 6/14

Aqaba 11/24

Jerash 6/16

Jordan Valley 12/21

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 15, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hussein Faddad 751267

Dr. Abbas Al Haidan 891236

Dr. Mohammad Al Awar 741391

Dr. Adnan Al Zaghoul 888140

Firas pharmacy 661912

Firas pharmacy 783536

Al Amman pharmacy 670285

Nahrook pharmacy 626672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shamsi pharmacy 637660

REDD:

Dr. Muzher Al Sheikh Salem ()

Al Sharra's pharmacy (985236)

ZARQA:

Dr. Mufid Danna ()

Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence immediate 630441

Rescue 6

Mufti to address Dubai conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nour Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) Director General Ibrahim Al Mufti will be the keynote speaker at a three-day "Forum for Women in Management," which starts in Dubai today.

The overall objective of the forum is to provide an opportunity for the 30 prominent participants, all women drawn from public and private organisations, to exchange ideas and experiences and to discuss those managerial skills related to women in the profession of management, according to an NHF spokesman.

Guest speakers have been invited to share their expertise with the participants, the spokesman said.

The forum has been designed for all women in senior, managerial positions, as well as profes-

sionals in the educational, medical and other fields who wish to explore items of particular relevance to their professional status and effectiveness.

In her speech, Mufti is expected to draw on her personal experience to formulate general concepts related to women and management, and the effects these concepts can have on national development. Mufti was Jordan's minister of social development in the early eighties.

Other subjects of discussion include the role of women in communications, development and the management of voluntary social care organisations, in addition to the role of women in raising a new generation of managers, managerial leadership, career development opportuni-



Ibrahim Al Mufti

ties, motivations and incentives, and setting standards for appraising performance.

Following the forum, Mufti will go on to Abu Dhabi where she will hold talks with United Arab Emirates officials and supporters of the Nour Al Hussein Foundation on the foundation's projects and future plans, the spokesman said.

Debt agreements formalised with France, Austria

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has reached two separate agreements with France and Austria to reschedule the Kingdom's debt repayments due in 1989 and 1990, in line with an understanding reached last July with the Paris Club of creditor nations.

Under the first agreement, France undertook to reschedule a total of \$128.7 million in interest and arrears unpaid in 1989 as well as the 1990 instalments.

The agreement stipulates that the payments are to be made after 10 years with a five-year grace period.

The agreement includes all principal due in 1989 and 1990 in addition to interest payments last year and half of those due in 1990.

Signed by Minister of Finance Basel Jarrah and French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Bauchard, the agreement also de-

ferred an additional \$12.5 million loan repayments over the coming three years starting 1991.

On Thursday, another agreement was reached between Jordan and Austria. It provided for rescheduling Jordan's \$13.5 million payment in arrears to Austria from the second half of 1989. The repayments will now be made over 10 years with a five-year grace period.

Burdened with a \$8.3 billion in external debts Jordan agreed in April last year with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to adopt an economic restructuring programme. In July, Amman sought to reschedule outstanding repayments by approaching the Paris Club and the London Club of commercial creditors.

So far, the Kingdom had reached bilateral rescheduling agreements with the United States, Denmark, West Germany and Finland. It also succeeded in rescheduling debts owed to the Soviet Union, which is not a member of the Paris Club.

Seville exposition president reviews Jordan's participation

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's participation in the 1992 Seville exposition in Spain was discussed here Thursday by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan at a meeting with the visiting president of the state corporation for the exposition, Emilio Casinello.

Casinello, who is on a tour of Arab countries participating in the exposition, briefed the Crown Prince on preparations for the event in which more than 100 countries and 20 various organisations from around the world are expected to take part.

Casinello said that the six-month exposition was expected to be visited by more than 20 million people.

He said that the exposition will present an array of cultural, touristic, artistic, informational and scientific activities.

Casinello also reviewed with the Crown Prince arrangements for holding an Arab-Iberian-Latin American conference in Spain in July. The Arab side will be headed by the Crown Prince and will include a group of Arab academicians and intellectuals.

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Contractors press push for government compensation

By Norman Murad Jordan Times Staff Reporter



Ali Abu Ragheb

AMMAN — The Jordanian Contractors' Association, which represents over 800 contractors in the construction sector of the Kingdom, is pressing for compensation from the government for what it describes as losses incurred as a result of the devaluation of the Jordanian dinar.

Ali Abu Ragheb, president of the association, said there is no question that contractors who had undertaken government projects did suffer "huge losses" when the government floated the Jordanian dinar last year. The concerned contractors received partial compensation payments from the government, which also promised further payments shortly thereafter, Abu Ragheb told the Jordan Times.

"But, it seems now that positions have changed," he said. "I am surprised... We were given promises and received official letters to this effect," he said.

There are provisions in the Jordanian law to protect contractors, he said, but the association does not want to get involved in lengthy lawsuits and prefers to settle the issue through coordination with the minister of public works.

"Article 205 of the civil law stipulates that if unforeseen forces cause changes after a contract is finalised and signed, then the court could order just

compensation for the contractors," Abu Ragheb pointed out.

He said he was seeking a meeting with Prime Minister Mudar Badran to discuss the issue.

The first compensation payment to contractors was made when the government of Sherif Zeid Ben Shaker was in office and before the then minister of public works, Shafiq Zawaydeh, resigned to run in the Nov. 8 elections to the Lower House of Parliament.

"The issue of compensation to contractors was postponed after the minister resigned," he said.

According to Abu Ragheb, the issue of compensation has become "a matter of survival for many contractors... They will not be able to continue their work because of the

losses."

Foreign workers

Another problem facing Jordanian contractors is the freeze ordered by the Ministry of Labour on the issuance of work permits to non-Jordanian workers, Abu Ragheb said. However, he added that he met with Minister of Labour Qasem Obeidat Thursday and that the "outcome of the meeting was fruitful."

"We reached an agreement that (contractors) would absorb available Jordanian workers in the construction sector before determining the number of foreign workers the sectors needs, and the minister promised to issue the necessary permits," he said.

Abu Ragheb said the minister "understood" that contractors needed foreign worker skills in the construction sector, but "the question remains why the ministry did not coordinate with employers to draw up a policy of gradual phasing out of foreign workers."

"It appears that decisions were taken in haste, creating panic," he said. "Jordan is recognised internationally as a country which carefully studies the situation before taking decisions with an open mind," he added. "But this kind of step indicates that there is panic."

Abu Ragheb conceded that contractors had not yet been affected by the freeze on work permits. However, he said, "the step might cause worries among contractors."

26 fired teachers reinstated

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission, has reinstated 26 teachers who had been dismissed for political reasons, Minister of Education and Higher Education Mohammad Hamdan announced Friday.

"A total of 50 teachers will be reinstated to their previous positions next week, bringing the total of reinstated teachers to 76," Hamdan told the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The ministry is currently studying the files of 298 teachers dismissed from their posts for political reasons and that "they will be given priority in filling vacant positions," Petra quoted the minister as saying.

Discussing the issue of establishing clubs for teachers in the Kingdom's governorates, Hamdan said that the ministry had begun setting three clubs in Amman, Irbid, and Karak two years ago. He said teachers' club would be established in all parts of the Kingdom, and the ministry would set special laws related to mem-

bership conditions and objectives of the organisations.

"The establishment of teachers' clubs falls within the framework of the ministry's endeavours to bolster teachers' role in society and is an expression of appreciation for their efforts in creating a new generation," Hamdan was quoted as saying by Petra.

Hamdan said that all appointments by the Ministry of Education were made in accordance with the bases set in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission.

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Jordan imports apples, citrus from Lebanon

AMMAN (J.T.) — Arrangements are being made to import up to 3,500 of Lebanese apples to meet the local market's needs and 10,000 tonnes of citrus fruit for processing purposes, local reports have said.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Lebanese newspapers as saying that the Jordan Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company (JAMPCO) decided to import 2,500 tonnes of apples in a barter trade agreement in exchange for vegetables and another 1,000 tonnes directly from the Lebanese markets.

The Lebanese ambassador here is arranging for the importation of 10,000 tonnes of Lebanese oranges to be processed into juice and Jordan is studying a Lebanese request for providing farm implements and fertilisers to Lebanese farmers as part of a package deal, according to the Petra report.

The Arabic Al Dustour daily quoted JAMPCO Director General Ayed Al Werr as saying

that the first consignment of Lebanese apples had already arrived and negotiations over imports of citrus fruit from Lebanon were continuing.

Werr was also quoted as saying that JAMPCO was holding contacts with the Foreign Ministry's Department for Palestinian Affairs on the prospect of importing citrus fruits from the occupied territories. Jordan has a capacity of absorbing up to 20,000 tonnes of citrus fruit annually for processing operations, he said.

The move to import apples from Lebanon came in the wake of complaints by local merchants at the central market place in Amman that they found rats in crates of apples imported from Turkey.

Werr denied that the apples on sale in Jordan at the time were imported through his office and said that no more apples were being imported from Turkey after a previous agreement for imports of 5,000 tonnes of Turkish apples had expired at the end of 1989.

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Jordan ships cement to Philippines

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC) announced Friday that it was loading a cargo vessel at Aqaba port with Jordanian cement destined for the Philippines.

A company statement said a total of 12,000 tonnes of cement would be loaded on board the "Pearl," which docked at Aqaba Thursday. JCFC has drawn up contracts to export one million tonnes of cement to countries in America, South-East Asia and Western Africa, the statement added.

JCFC Managing Director Khalid Al Duhair said in a statement published in the local press that Jordan's klinker sales during 1990 are expected to earn the Kingdom some \$50 million, thanks to new contracts drawn up with the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam.

Duhair also said that the company had contracts to sell Egypt two consignments of 750,000 tonnes of cement each but that the process was being delayed due to handling problems.

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where the engagement ceremony took place.

Hattar, who met his Swedish fiancée three years ago, told the Jordan Times they had plans to get married next summer "perhaps in a similar submarine festivity."

For Hattar, the ceremony was also an economic success. "The expenses, he said, were far

more reasonable compared to the extravagant marriages and engagements for which Jordanians are renowned.

"We spent only JD 50, ten for diving tickets and the remainder for the engagement rings," said Hattar, who is a member of the Jordan Diving Club and the Jordan Amateur Glider's Club.

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Defence Law needs to go

MUCH TALK has been heard on the need to lift the emergency regime from Jordan and some concrete action has been taken to phase it out on a step-by-step basis. Yet, little attention has been given to the Defence Law, which imposes restrictions on civil rights and liberties almost as much as martial law. To be sure, some voices were heard in Parliament about the need to repeal the Defence Law in conjunction with the lifting of martial law, but the overall attention of parliamentarians was directed on the latter.

What gives an added urgency to the call for repealing the Defence Law is the fact that Israel often refers to it as justification for its oppressive policies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Whether in expelling Palestinians living under occupation or detaining them without due process of the law, Israeli authorities often maintain that they are in fact observing laws that are still applicable in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and inherited from Jordan insofar as the West Bank is concerned. This fact alone gives a greater sense of urgency to the need to repeal the 55-year-old law in order to pull the rug from under the feet of Israeli authorities who exploit it for their own ends. Once Jordan repeals that law and lifts martial law as well, Israel will be denied any semblance of legal justifications for its actions and policies against the Palestinian people in the West Bank.

As far as Jordan is concerned, one cannot truly speak about lifting martial law without in the same breath calling for the repeal of the Defence Law, albeit the scope of the latter is much more limited than the first. Whether a Jordanian is detained in accordance with the Defence Law or the martial law makes no difference. In both cases he or she would have been denied his or her constitutional and legal rights under one pretext or another. It is therefore logical to expect the government, which has already taken meaningful measures to lift the martial regime from the law books of the country, to begin the complementary and necessary step of repealing the Defence Law. Otherwise it would be taking with the right hand what it has given with the left hand.

Admittedly, any action in the direction of removing the Defence Law from Jordanian jurisprudence would need to be taken after a thorough examination of the legal implications of such a step. But the process to rule out that law must begin in earnest. The same experts assigned the mandate of phasing out martial law in stages can also be asked to be seized with the task of repealing the Defence Law. Otherwise, the time needed to root out the Defence Law would be that much longer and agonising.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

AN EDITORIAL in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Friday reviewed the Lebanese strife. It said there was no alternative to legitimate government rule to end the bloody situation in the western as well as the eastern sectors of Beirut. The paper described as tragic the situation in east Beirut, "where rival Christian forces are waging a fierce battle and shedding the blood of innocent people," and said that whatever the result of the current battles there could be no victor or vanquished. Only through unity under the legitimate government of President Elias Hrawi can the Lebanese people breathe freely in a peaceful country and only through reconciliation among the various factions can the country stand on its feet again, the paper said. Those who continue to oppose the legitimate government and president, said the paper, are the enemies of the Lebanese people and they should be confronted by the Arab Nation at large to help bring about stability to Lebanon. But the paper added, the Lebanese people themselves should take the initiative and find a formula to live together in peace.

A columnist writing in Al Ra'i daily praised the Soviet call for an urgent session of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the question of Jewish immigrants settling in occupied Palestine. Abdul Rahim Omar said Moscow had been a staunch supporter of Arab rights in general and the rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland in particular, but now that the Soviet Union is allowing more freedoms to its people and in the light of the perestroika being applied everywhere in the country, one can naturally expect Moscow to offer freedom to Jews and non-Jews to express their desires freely and without any pressure. Despite that the Arabs still continue to demand and rightly so, that the Soviets do something to stop the influx of Jews to Palestine, the writer said. The Soviet Union, for its part, has now responded and is seeking diplomatic ways to appease the Arabs and safeguard the rights of all parties. The Arabs want from the Soviet Union moves to prevent the Zionists from uprooting the Palestinians, Omar said. He added that the Arabs consider the influx as a flagrant violation of their rights and they have the right to demand a halt to this dangerous immigration.

Al Dustour daily said the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) grouping Iraq, Egypt, North Yemen and Jordan — celebrates its first anniversary Saturday satisfied with its achievements in the past year, and the series of agreements designed to bring about full integration among the four states. What is needed now is serious efforts towards unity that should incorporate all Arab countries and the Arab masses harbour great hopes that the ACC leaders will take steps towards achieving this goal, the paper said. The Arabs have so far succeeded in forming three economic and political blocs, including the ACC, and it is natural for the Arab masses to expect a merger between them so that the long-awaited Arab unity becomes a reality, it added.

VIEW FROM AMMAN

History repeats itself, but are we aware?

By Dr. Kamel S. Abu Jaber

FOR those who think, it is no surprise that everything surprises us. And like all surprised people we are hardly ever capable of responding properly. And so it is with us this time too where our reaction to Soviet Jewish immigration is typical of our usual confusion and disarray. The affair is of particular importance since we know, or should know that it has been one of the major goals of the Zionist dream to ingather from the so-called diaspora all the Jews of the world in the so-called promised land. We know that for centuries now the Jews of the world greeted each other with the words, "Next year in Jerusalem." We also know that from the first Zionist congress in Basle, Switzerland in 1897, the dream was turned into a blue print for action and was put into effect during and after the conclusion of the World War I. During the thirties, forties, fifties... etc we saw the Jewish hordes flocking into Palestine fortified with their ancient hatreds, immune to logic and willing and capable to do injury to others at the least provocation; most often without any provocation at all.

In reading the literally hundreds of articles in our press, the statements made by our officials and the terrific commotion — mind you with no real action — one is struck at our apparent helplessness. Sadly those who have some memories recall that we had the same reaction when the Ethiopian Falasha Jews arrived in Palestine. As far as I know the Falasha Jews are now in Palestine and our reaction then, as I am afraid our reaction in this case too, will amount to nothing. Soon the Israelis will get us busy with another of the "realities" they are so good at creating. Our attention will shift elsewhere and the Zionist grinding machine, slowly but ever so surely will do what it thinks it must do. The great philosopher Santayana once remarked that those who forget history are bound to suffer living it again.

His Majesty King Hussein cautioned against this possibility at least two years ago. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has

been warning against it as well as against the Israeli design at fragmenting and "balkanising" the Arab World. The Israelis have made no secret of their plans. On the contrary: it was the Zionist propaganda machine, and its very effective lobby in the West in general, and in the United States in particular, that was behind the alleged human rights campaign against the Soviet Union; the latter accused of restricting Jewish immigration. The campaign has been going on for years and for those who read and recall, the campaign, like most other Israeli efforts, was bound to succeed. Why did we do nothing? Is it right that we should act surprised? Where was the Arab League? The Palestine Liberation Organisation? Anybody?

The affair is so sad because it is so indicative of our lack of organisation even on the simplest level. We seem to continue to exist on the sidelines of world affairs, merely filling a space with no will of our own living our life from crisis to crisis as if no connection between them exists. Those of us who claim to be aware whisper in a desperate silent prayer, "Please Lord make our next crisis a manageable one."

The immigration of approximately a million souls of Soviet Jews over the next few years is indeed a tragedy on the scale of that of 1948 and more. More, because now that the state has been established, and its military machine well-oiled, it is in a better position to utilise the new manpower. Two other factors of relevance should also be remembered: one that Israel appears to be on the threshold of another stage of its expansionism; a fact that was not hidden by Premier Shamir nor any of his cohorts, nor for that matter denied except feebly and certainly unconvincingly by "opposition" leader Mr. Shimon Peres. The other factor has to do with the exceedingly efficient use of manpower on the Israeli side and the total opposite of such efficiency on ours.

History does repeat itself for those who have no memory. The

similarity between what took place in 1948 and now is indeed striking. It was then, as is the case now, that the Soviet Union provided the immigrants; the men, and the United States provided the funds. Once again we will surely hear wailing wall at the United Nations to protest. We will surely hear much words of sympathy and just as much soothing sounds and shaking of the heads in solidarity with our cause. We may even succeed in passing another loftily worded resolution full of "wherefores" and "whereases" condemning and calling on Israel to do what it will not do.

Our case in the United States continues to be hostage to the domestic power politics and the strength of the Israeli lobby. This we knew, or should have known since 1948. And since 1948, in fact most Americans who visit the region — ranging from professors, lawyers, labour leaders, congressmen, senators and various sundry officials — have told us we should build our own lobby like that of the Zionists to defend our cause. We know that the battle for Palestine, and in view of our military weakness, is just as important in America as it is in the Middle East. We know that the task is not an impossible one and that it is within the reach of even Jordan alone, not to mention a partnership with the PLO or other Arab states. Why have we done nothing is yet another parallel to our lack of organisation and vision. There is another parallel that we should point to which should, at least this time move us to action. Again it is because of domestic politics, though this time in the Soviet Union that we are coming face to face with another tragedy. It is a Soviet economic need to liberalise, and Mr. Gorbachev's desire to provide consumer goods to his people, glasnost and perestroika, that lie behind this latest "fact creation" affair. Maybe we should respond to the call made by the Lower House of Parliament deputies and revive the "Eastern Front."

Soviet hardliners struggle to grasp collapse of communism

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuters

MOSCOW — The Soviet Union is still struggling to come to terms with the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe even as Moscow cautiously embarks on the road of political pluralism already taken by its one-time satellites.

The official line promoted by Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his supporters is clear: East Europeans, who for 40 years lived with carbon copies of the Soviet system, are now free to choose whatever model they like.

Debates at last week's landmark Central Committee meeting in Moscow, and private comments by Soviet and East European sources, show that some officials still have a psychological problem grasping what has happened and why.

This comes on top of the practical problem of trying to run the East European bloc — the Warsaw Pact military alliance and the Comecon trading group — when the political and economic systems of their members are rapidly diverging.

One Czechoslovak official, whose diplomatic colleagues had been revisiting Soviet diplomats they once studied with, said: "Some of the Soviets still think we're talking about reforming socialism. They don't realise it's gone much further than that."

Some of the discussion at the Central Committee plenum went further, suggesting behind-the-scenes bitterness by hardliners that Gorbachev's perestroika reform policies had, in their view, "lost" Eastern Europe.

One speaker said he was aware many conservatives believed perestroika had destroyed the East European "buffer zone" that shielded the Soviet Union from the West.

Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze rallied to the defence of the policy.

"Don't blame perestroika for destroying the political structure of Europe," he said. "It was destroyed by the will of the people, who were no longer willing to put up with violence."

Many Soviet citizens feel that East Europeans who deface statues of Lenin and rename streets

that once honoured Soviet heroes are being ungrateful for their liberation from Nazism by the Soviet Union and for subsequent economic aid from Moscow.

Officials at the Central Committee express alarm at what they see as a "wave of anti-Communism" sweeping in particular East Germany and Czechoslovakia.

"Honest Communists, those who kept their hands clean and were not even part of the corruption and oppression before, are being driven to suicide," one official said.

Many perestroika supporters say they must try to see things from the East European point of view.

"We must understand our share of responsibility for the economic system imposed upon these countries," political scientist Pyotr Gladkov wrote in the weekly Moscow News. "We were also responsible for suppressing any attempts to restructure or improve the political system."

Anti-Soviet sentiment in Eastern Europe was directed not at the Soviet public, Gladkov wrote,



but "against a system which, combined with their own similar systems, has oppressed them for 40 years and us for even longer."

Soviet diplomats who share such views say that by and large, the new East European governments are grateful to Gorbachev for starting the reforms that led to the overthrow of the old regimes. "But gratitude doesn't last for

ever," one said. These diplomats say they are trying to build a new relationship with East European capitals, but are worried that strongly anti-Soviet governments may come to power in some of them following elections in the next few months.

"Poland looks like an island of stability," one official said. Poland, where Solidarity came to power last year and has pursued caution in its ties with Moscow, is the only country in the region not to have general elections planned this year.

The biggest problem for Soviet East European diplomacy is East Germany — host to 380,000 Soviet front-line troops — as it careers towards reunification with West Germany.

This, however, has now been put in international hands with an agreement at a 23-nation conference in Ottawa on Feb. 13 that the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and the two

Germanys would work together to resolve the problem.

Some Gorbachev allies say that what has happened in Eastern Europe provides a time-warning for the Soviet Union itself.

Ideology chief Vadim Medvedev told the Central Committee that developments there showed what happens when "over decades of deformation and stagnation, a critical mass of explosive material has piled up."

Perestroika, by uncovering the problems and enabling reforms, had allowed the country to avoid catastrophe, he said.

Officials said, however, they did not believe Gorbachev's decision to drop the Communist party monopoly on power was directly influenced by similar moves in Eastern Europe.

"This country is a law unto itself," one said. "The main factor for change has been the total failure of the Soviet economy to compete with the West."

Socialism — the Japanese way

By Seigo Sakamoto
Reuters

TOKYO — After being out of power for more than 40 years, the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) is trying hard to convince the voters — and itself — that it is ready to govern.

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has ruled for 34 years, is expected to squeak by with a narrow majority in the Feb. 18 elections.

But the JSP expects its own kind of victory at the polls — an end to one-party rule by the LDP — and it is setting aside its internal squabbles and softening its anti-U.S., anti-business stance of the past.

"If we want power, it is natural that we should start from reality," Shigeru Ito, chairman of the JSP's policy board, said. "We should aim for reforms on a gradual but steady basis."

The JSP is not seeking enough candidates to stand a chance of winning outright victory on Sunday, but has said it would seek to rule with other non-Communist parties.

The pro-business LDP faces its toughest test in more than three

decades of rule in the parliamentary elections. Analysts expect it to maintain a narrow majority, but say the possibility of a Socialist-led coalition cannot be ruled out.

"We are aiming for 140 seats. If we fail to win 130, we'll have to do some serious soul-searching," Ito said.

The JSP, the main opposition group, held 84 seats in parliament's powerful lower house before that 512-member chamber was dissolved for this month's election.

Led by the flamboyant Takako Doi, Japan's first female political leader, the JSP spearheaded an upset victory by the opposition in upper house elections last July.

Sex and money scandals, unpopular sales tax and farmer anger at agriculture liberalisation all contributed to the LDP's loss of control of the upper house for the first time in its 34-year history.

"We were all thrilled at the dramatic change," Ito said.

"It signifies the beginning of the end of single-party rule by the LDP and the dawning of a new era which can allow for a change of power."

But he admitted that the party

has much work to do to get ready to govern.

"We might have fallen into the habit of thinking of ourselves as being a permanent opposition party," Ito said. "We have to radically alter our style — shifting from opposing anything the government proposes to taking responsibility for the future of Japan."

That means giving up some of the party's most cherished beliefs because they are viewed as unrealistic by many of Japan's voters.

"It is only natural that we should continue to be on the side of the Western democracies," Ito said. "Our economy is based on market mechanism. We won't adopt a government-controlled economy. But at the same time, we will impose restrictions or offer guidance to meet the needs of the whole society."

The party has also softened its opposition to the U.S.-Japan security treaty, which was first signed in 1951 and which governs military relations between the two nations.

"We will allow the U.S.-Japan security treaty to continue, the

Japanese self-defence forces to exist and existing nuclear power plants to operate. From this reality, we make a start," Ito said.

The JSP used to be notorious for fierce intra-party ideological strife. But with the chance of an opposition coalition emerging, leftists and rightists within the party have put aside their quarrels for now, analysts said.

But the party has had less success in convincing its potential coalition partners that it is willing to change its ways and adopt more middle-of-the-road policies.

"Immediately after the election ends, we plan to resume serious, substantive discussion on a coalition," Ito said.

"If we really intend to work out agreement, it's a simple matter." Its potential partners are the middle-of-the-road Democratic Socialist Party, the Buddhist-backed Komeito (Clean Government) and the tiny United Social Democratic Party.

But analysts said that about the only issue the four non-Communist opposition parties agreed on is the need to abolish the three per cent sales tax introduced last April.

U.S. pressure seen key to South Africa future

By Carol Giacomo
Reuters

WASHINGTON — American experts, worried that Pretoria may dash the high hopes created by Nelson Mandela's release, say U.S. pressure to begin black-white negotiations this year on South Africa's future could be crucial.

South African President F.W. de Klerk has won praise for freeing the charismatic black leader after 27 years in jail, and for offering the prospect of negotiations between ruling whites and the black majority.

But some analysts, including influential members of the U.S. Congress, say that while de Klerk's actions are important, they fall far short of fundamental changes in apartheid.

"The South African government has not prepared the whites

for any change of life. It has not told them there will have to be some sacrifices," said the foreign policy adviser to a senior congressional leader.

The adviser, who visited South Africa recently, said he believed the chances were high that Pretoria could backslide on the road to a political settlement.

But Africa expert Pauline Baker of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace said "backsliding would be more dangerous than moving forward" for both de Klerk and Mandela, because of the high expectation generated in South Africa.

Senior U.S. officials have expressed hope negotiations could start before the end of the year, but anti-apartheid activists, noting the pace of radical change in Eastern Europe, argue that talks could happen sooner if Pretoria

wanted them to.

President George Bush has said Washington is prepared to play a "very useful role" in solving South Africa's problems.

Bush told a news conference this week he was willing to broker talks between Mandela and de Klerk, in a similar way to former President Jimmy Carter's mediation of the Camp David Middle East accord, if the two sides thought it "helpful."

But analysts say the U.S. role is likely to be quite different from the one played at Camp David, or in negotiating last year's agreement on the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and Namibian independence.

In the latter case, the United States was the mediator of an international agreement with Cuba, Angola and South Africa under the auspices of the United Nations.

The struggle to dismantle apartheid, on the other hand, "is an internal conflict which has to be settled by the major parties internally," said Baker.

U.S. experts said however the United States and other countries could be important in pushing the two sides towards negotiation, by maintaining economic sanctions and asserting support for a non-racial democracy.

The point at which Washington might lift sanctions imposed by Congress in 1986 over then-President Ronald Reagan's veto has been much debated here since Mandela's release, but appears still far off.

Bush told the news conference he would lift no sanctions until Pretoria met all conditions set by the U.S. sanctions law.

His position mirrors that of influential congressmen, as well as Mandela.

Not a traitor

To the Editor:

AS for V. Wabbeh and Karen Asfour (Letters to the Editor, Jordan Times, Feb. 11, 1990), I wish to thank them for their "constructive" criticism concerning the service of alcoholic beverages on RJ and wearing the hejab.

If I gave the impression that wearing the hejab makes a person "good" and not wearing one makes her "bad" then I am sorry. When I said "good" Muslim women, I meant obedient. Clothes do not make women pure. A woman's purity comes from within herself. It is a Muslim woman's Islamic duty to be covered. If she chooses to obey this duty, this is her concern, for she will be judged not by me or fellow man, but by God alone. Who am I to judge anyone? And if you V. Wabbeh think me vain because I testify to Islam or wear a hejab, then you are wrong, for on the contrary, I am a humble follower of Islam trying to convince people to obey God's will.

I am well aware of what other foreign Muslim women wear as I have come in contact with a wide variety. No matter the nationality, Islamic duty remains the same.

As for loving my country, V. Wabbeh, I think I will be the judge. Only God knows how much I love my own country and miss it, but that does not mean I am blind to nations that are against Islam or have to accept them. If you read Open Forum, "American Bashing," (Jan. 20), I was the person who defended America.

But, I love Jordan too. I am not a traitor for loving Jordan and Jordanians. Do you remember Ruth of the Bible who said to her husband, "Wherever thou goest, I will go. Thy people shall be my people, I'll love!"

Read John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." There is a man "Mr. Facing-both-ways" who declares he is always with the right, but serves in this way. Think of this, Wabbeh and Asfour.

I am also not traitor for loving and professing Islam. If you call yourself Muslims then you must practice your faith. We cannot twist Islam to our own fancies or have "modern" explanations for future!

I thank you for your patience and bear in mind that I attack no person. I do attack, however, non-Islamic beliefs by Muslims. I wish I could say the same for you both. Just out of curiosity, do you besides not wearing a scarf, fast and pray? Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

E. Yaghi
Amman

OT: 1 on 10P

La 2ème Exposition Internationale du Livre d'Amman s'ouvre mardi

Réveiller un marché frileux en Jordanie

Pour la deuxième année consécutive, la plus importante maison d'édition de Jordanie, Dar al-Bashir, organise du 20 février au 1er mars un "Salon International du Livre" à Amman (*). Selon les organisateurs, 25.000 titres, parus chez quelque

177 éditeurs arabes, européens, asiatiques et américains, seront proposés au public. Pour les pouvoirs publics, qui notent l'absence de représentants de la plupart des "participants" à l'exposition, il s'agit

avant tout d'une "opération commerciale". Une polémique, qui a de quoi surprendre dans un pays où, à l'instar du monde arabe, les livres restent une denrée rare.



Le Salon du Livre d'Amman: le livre se vend mal.

Radwan Da'boul est débordé. Propriétaire de Dar al-Bashir, la principale maison d'édition jordanienne, il passe ses journées au téléphone. Modif. réglez tous les problèmes d'impression, les envois d'invitations... avant grand début, date de l'ouverture du 22ème Salon International du Livre (SIL) au Centre des Expositions, face à l'université de Jordanie. Une tâche, dont il a pris l'initiative tout seul, l'an dernier.

"Je suis l'unique éditeur du pays à participer au Salon de Francfort, le grand rendez-vous du livre en Europe. Je vais également à Damas, à Ryad... Je vois le rôle que jouent ces manifestations pour encourager la production d'ouvrages, comme pour la lecture. Et je pense qu'il est temps pour la Jordanie d'avoir aussi sa semaine annuelle de l'édition", explique-t-il.

A en croire les chiffres, l'idée semble bonne. En 1989, nous avions

"Le salon 1990 sera son sixième anniversaire en tant que salon annuel, poursuit le directeur de Dar al-Bashir. De grands éditeurs, tels que la BBC ou Oxford y participent. Par ailleurs, toutes les disciplines seront abordées, depuis les sciences exactes et humaines au roman, en passant par les religions". La précision n'est pas innocente. En mars

dernier, certains journaux avaient violemment critiqué la première exposition, trop focalisée sur la religion musulmane. "Est-ce un salon du livre ou un forum de l'islam?", avait-t-il été écrit à l'époque l'un des quotidiens arabes du royaume.

L'argument a d'ailleurs été

par le directeur général du département des bibliothèques, des documents et des archives nationales (DLDNA) du ministère de la Culture, Ahmad Sharika. "C'est une manifestation privée, qui abuse des mots en se qualifiant d'internationale. L'an dernier, il n'y avait presque que des livres islamiques. Cette année, les organisateurs parlent de près de deux cents éditeurs "participants", alors qu'en fait, il n'y a que les distributeurs et pas de représentants de ces sociétés. C'est une opération commerciale", souligne-t-il.

Ce dernier qualificatif, Radwan Da'boul l'accepte totalement. "Ce salon est évidemment l'occasion pour le public d'acheter des livres. Nous le vendons avec près de 30% de réduction pendant une semaine. Vous trouverez même des ouvrages interdits dans le pays et exceptionnellement proposés à l'exposition". Pour le directeur de Dar al-Bashir, cette initiative a surtout pour objectif de "faire se rencontrer des éditeurs et de leur faire connaître la Jordanie. Cette année, nous aurons des représentants de compagnies étrangères", affirme-t-il.

Autre intérêt, selon lui: mettre un peu d'ordre dans l'édition locale, marquée par de trop nombreuses

"opérations". "Les grandes maisons d'édition pourraient vérifier si les copyrights sont respectés ou non par leurs collègues sur les trois dernières décennies. De 1955 à 1985, les pays arabes ont progressé de 10 points (27 à 37). Dans le même temps, l'Afrique Noire, par exemple, en gagnait 14, passant de 10 à 24. Toujours en 1985, le monde arabe arrivait bon dernier dans la répartition planétaire de l'édition du livre, avec 0,9%, pour une population totale évaluée à 4% de la population du globe. L'Océanie, avec seulement 0,5% de la population mondiale, affichait elle 1,5% du gâteau de l'édition (voir graphique).

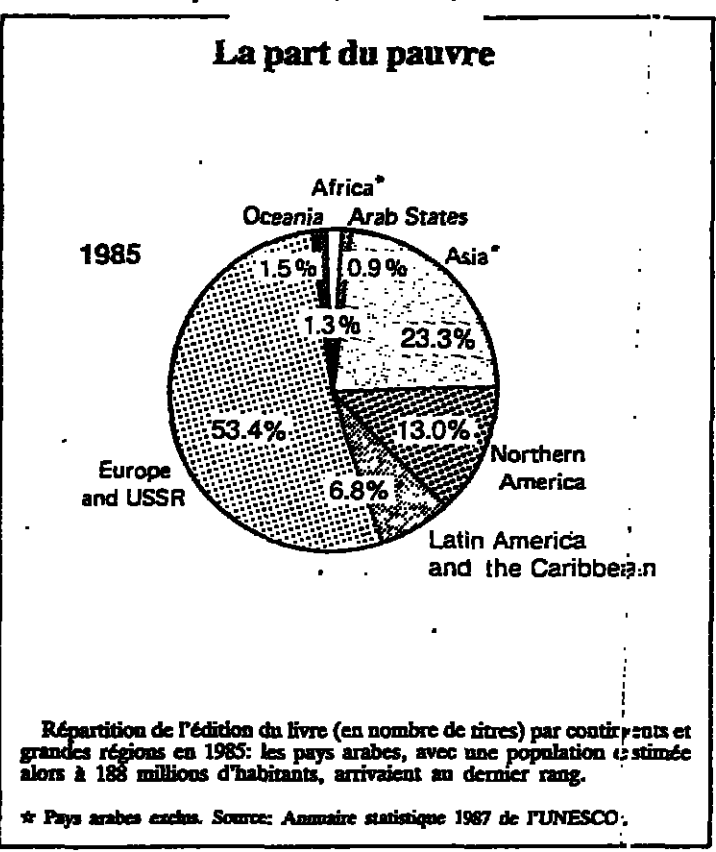
Autre comparaison troublante: celle avec Israël. En 1983, l'Etat hébreu totalisait un volume d'édition (à l'exclusion de la presse) de 1,5% du monde arabe, soit 10 fois plus que le monde arabe dans son ensemble. Mais c'est avec l'Europe que la foudre demeure le plus vertigineux. Avec 7.000 titres publiés en 1985, l'ensemble des pays de la Ligue arabe n'enregistrait que 23% de la production française (30.424 titres).

Un sujet de débat et de préoccupation en perspective pour les participants au premier Salon euro-arabe du Livre, qu'organise l'Institut du monde arabe au mois de mai à Paris et auquel Dar al-Bashir espère prendre part.

Alain Reynon.

Un statut moribond

Mais c'est surtout à l'échelle du monde arabe que le statut quasi moribond du livre apparaît le plus crûment. En 1985, les 20 Etats qui le composent, affichaient un nombre de 37 titres par million d'habitants, selon les statistiques de l'UNESCO (voir encadré). En Amérique du Sud, où le sous-développement, et notamment l'analphabétisation,



Le lojban, nouvelle langue artificielle

Le rêve de communication universelle

Après l'esperanto, le volapük et quelques dizaines d'autres langues artificielles, le lojban, qui se développe modestement aux Etats-Unis, tente à son tour de réaliser le vieux rêve d'une langue universelle.

"Xa du tevi fo la lojban". Comprenez: Parlez-vous lojban? Si vous posez la question, on vous répondra généralement non. A moins que vous ne tombiez sur l'un des quelque 600 adeptes, répartis dans le monde, de la dernière née des langues artificielles.

Le lojban est en fait une nouvelle version du loglan (logique language), dont un sociologue de l'université de Floride, James Cooke Brown, avait posé les bases il y a environ 35 ans. Son idée, à l'époque: inventer une langue culturellement neutre, complètement logique et sans la moindre ambiguïté. Son objectif: vérifier l'hypothèse scientifique de Sapir-Whorf, selon laquelle la structure du langage conditionne la pensée de ses utilisateurs.

Des vents de 70 à 90 km/h, 40mm d'eau en une nuit... La Jordanie en grande dépression



Des vents, qui soufflent en moyenne à 70 km/h, avec des rafales à 90 km/h; un air chargé de sable arabe au Sahara; un énorme orage et des précipitations de 35 mm à Amman, de 40 mm dans les régions du nord-ouest du pays en moins de 7 heures... La Jordanie a été touchée mercredi par la grande dépression, qui sévit depuis la fin janvier en Europe.

Dans la capitale notamment, la violence des précipitations s'est traduite en basses vives par des rues et des magasins inondés dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi. Un phénomène identique a été observé dans de nombreux wadi du pays, sans causer cependant de dégâts importants.

"Nous avons enregistré des pressions de 990 millibars. Ce sont les plus basses de la saison", souligne Ali Abanda, directeur du département de la météorologie nationale. "Un tel phénomène ne se produit ici qu'une ou deux fois par an. La tempête de mercredi a été provoquée par un léger déplacement vers la Turquie de la grande dépression, installée actuellement au-dessus de l'Europe du Nord. D'où un front froid très actif, responsable des orages et des pluies diluviennes, mêlées de neige fondue".

Le retour au calme d'ici s'explique par un nouveau mouvement du cœur de cette dépression vers l'Europe, où de nouvelles tempêtes se sont levées avant-hier. Ainsi en France, où avalanches et inondations ont fait jeudi six morts et cinq blessés. Le même jour, au large des côtes atlantiques, une plateforme de forage, avec 33 personnes à son bord, a rompu ses amarres. Depuis la fin du mois dernier, les intempéries frappent sans discontinuer l'ouest du Vieux Continent. L'une d'elle avait fait 23 morts, le 3 février dernier, en France.

La Jordanie, quant à elle, devrait à nouveau faire les frais du "mauvais temps européen" ce week-end. "Nous nous attendons au passage, samedi ou dimanche, d'une deuxième front froid, avec vents et pluie", avertit Ali Abanda.

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Perrier withdraws bottles from all world markets

PARIS (R) — France's Perrier has said it was withdrawing its familiar green bottles from all world markets to reassure consumers but said it had tracked down the source of the toxic agent contaminating its mineral water.

"We do not want the slightest doubt, however small, to tarnish our product's reputation for quality and purity," Chairman Gustave Level told a chaotic news conference at the company's Paris headquarters.

Level, a benign 75-year-old who rarely meets journalists, told them "human error" was to blame for the presence of benzene, a colourless solvent thought to cause cancer.

The discovery sparked a worldwide scare and sent Perrier shares tumbling on the Paris stock market.

The worldwide recall, involving up to 160 million bottles, will cost the company an estimated

400 million francs (\$70 million) before tax. Perrier is the world's leading mineral water producer and markets one billion bottles a year.

General Manager Frederick Zimmer said a filter, which normally removed impurities such as benzene from the natural gas which gives Perrier its fizz had not been replaced at the firm's bottling plant in Vergeze in southeastern France.

"The filters were meant to be changed every six weeks. They had not been replaced for three or four months," he said.

Perrier officials said the filters had now been changed, the water was being regularly tested, and uncontaminated supplies would be back on the shelves within days in some countries and two or three weeks at the latest in others.

Zimmer admitted there had been negligence and said the

company intended taking disciplinary action.

The health scare started at the weekend when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it had discovered "tiny" traces of benzene in samples of France's best-known mineral water.

As it spread, with distributors in Canada, Japan, Denmark, the Netherlands and West Germany withdrawing their stocks from sale, Perrier shares tumbled.

Shares on the Paris bourse closed 60 francs (\$10) down at 1,413 francs (\$248) Wednesday, 16.4 per cent down from last Friday's closing price of 1,692 francs (\$297).

The French stock exchange watchdog COB announced Wednesday it was launching an inquiry into possible insider trading in Perrier stock on the MO-NEP options market last Friday, a day before news of the contamination broke.

Saudi share market poised for steady growth after boom

BAHRAIN (R) — Saudi Arabia's infant share market looks poised for steady growth in 1990 after dramatic gains last year in stock prices of some banks and industrial firms.

Plans to launch the first electronic share dealing system in the Gulf in April and possible new share flotations should whet investor appetite for Saudi stocks, share analysts have said.

But slower growth in company profits and government steps to curb speculation should keep share price rises lower than last year, when the official stock index jumped 20 per cent.

"The market will continue to grow but in a more normal way based on improved company performance — we will not see the kind of wild speculation we saw last year," said a member of the Riyadh-based Consulting Centre for Finance and Investment.

In October the Saudi index for 55 listed companies traded on the kingdom's telephone and telex market broke 100 for the first time since it was set up in February 1985. It has continued to rise, reaching 110.26 at the end of January.

Figures released by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) show the total value of shares traded in 1989 was 3.4 billion riyals (\$906 million), 65 per cent up on 1988.

Traded share value of listed commercial banks soared 205 per cent over 1988, taking up about half the total business volume.

Cement firms followed with a 52 per cent gain in traded share value, then industrial companies with 36 per cent and service firms with 23 per cent.

Analysts said this was offset by sharp declines in the electricity and agriculture sectors.

Banking sector gains were caused partly by a general economic recovery in the kingdom fuelled by higher oil prices, the analysts said.

But the main cause was the popularity of Al Rajhi Banking and Investment Corporation, whose share price shot up to a high of 1800 riyals from 100 when they were issued late in 1988.

Duty of up to 20 per cent placed on imported cement at end-1988 sharply boosted the performance of local cement firms.

Profits of Arab Cement Company rose five-fold to 111 million riyals (\$30 million) and its share price trebled.

Saudi Pharmaceutical Industry and Medical Appliances Corp (SPIMACO) — which has yet to begin operating — was a market leader in the industry sector. Its share price rose to 338 riyals in December from 168 in January 1989 on news of deals it had arranged with international drug companies.

In a bid to halt price swings, Finance and National Economy Minister Mohammad Ali Abal Khalil warned investors in October against unwarranted speculation.

Prices for some firms fell as a result, with Al Rajhi shares plunging 500 riyals to about 1300 just after the announcement.

"The Saudi share market does not run on company news — it runs mainly on rumours," a banker commented at the time.

Analysts said SAMA went out of its way to protect investors but its rules aimed at doing this sometimes made it hard for firms to go public or to raise capital.

Any company which wanted to sell shares to the public must first agree with the ministry of commerce on an existing share value, based on its fixed assets rather than on performance.

This could lead to undervaluation of shares of established firms, while new companies with no track record could find it easy to find buyers for their shares, the analysts said.

"The government feels the public is not sophisticated enough to judge the value of a company — so instead of having information disclosure requirements, it takes responsibility for ensuring the share value isn't too high," said one.

Government rules also prevented shareholders from taking money raised through a public flotation out of the company, so if they wanted to recoup part of an initial investment they did so through a private placement, the analysts said.

Bankers said automated share dealing would revolutionise the market by providing accurate pricing and information, enabling small investors to compete better with large ones.

Poland, Paris Club sign historical credit accord

PARIS (R) — Poland Friday signed what was dubbed an historic agreement with the Paris Club of government creditors rescheduling payments on a record \$9.4 billion of official debt.

Paris Club Chairman Jean-Claude Trichet, head of the

French treasury, appealed to commercial banks after the agreement was signed to grants terms that were at least as favourable.

"It's the most extraordinary agreement we've ever had," Trichet told a news conference, saying the deal was historic. Poland owes about \$27 billion of its total \$40 billion foreign debt to the Paris Club.

Trichet said the new deal included \$3.4 billion in interest payments owed to the end of 1989 (in which Poland had fallen behind).

It also covered 100 per cent of the principal and interest payments falling due between now and the end of March 1991, he said.

Poland and 17 creditor governments have been locked in negotiations on the rescheduling since Wednesday.

Trichet said the speed at which the Western governments had managed to agree on rescheduling such an enormous sum showed their confidence in Poland and their desire to help it implement its courageous market-oriented reforms.

The Paris Club now expects commercial banks to postpone all the interest that Poland owes them — something that has never been done for any other country — Trichet said.

Drexel shuts shop

NEW YORK (R) — Drexel Burnham Lambert issued final paychecks to many of its employees and began shutting down Thursday, ending a golden era in which it led Wall Street through an unprecedented takeover boom.

It was the last working day for many of the firm's 5,300 employees. Although some Drexel offices will officially be open, inside sources said staff will not be paid after Thursday.

Drexel, which built a hugely

profitable business financing scores of companies with high-yielding, speculative debt securities called junk bonds, filed Tuesday for protection from its creditors under federal bankruptcy laws and said it would shut down.

Some had feared wider fallout from the largest-ever bankruptcy on Wall Street, but the phaseout of once-mighty Drexel caused barely a ripple.

Drexel said last week it was looking for buyers for its operations, but Wall Street players said there was little interest.

ASEAN urges EC not to neglect poor countries for East Europe

KUCHING, Malaysia (R) — Political and economic changes sweeping Europe could spell disaster for developing nations, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad said Friday.

"Fears have been expressed that large-scale Western assistance to Eastern Europe will be at the expense of other developing countries," Mahathir told a meeting of European and South East Asian foreign ministers.

He said the setting up of a single market among European Community (EC) member states in 1992 would give the EC "an enhanced economic and political role."

But he added: "The potential is there for an inward-looking and less open trading group. If we add Eastern Europe as well, the EC might well do without the rest of the world."

While the EC had stressed the importance of South East Asia as an investment centre, he said, "the attitude of the investors is somewhat different."

European investors still preferred to put their money in Europe and North America, Mahathir told the opening session of a biennial meeting between foreign ministers from the EC and the six-member Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The EC is ASEAN's third largest trading partner after the United States and Japan, accounting for 13 per cent of ASEAN's exports and 14 per cent of imports in 1987.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore.

Irish Foreign Minister Gerard Collins, president of the EC Council, reassured Mahathir that developments in Eastern Europe would not adversely affect ASEAN's interests.

"The importance of ASEAN is too great and your achievements in terms of peace, stability and economic growth too substantial for us to consider any lessening of our interest in this region," he said.

The EC commissioner for North-South relations, Abel Matutes, added: "The EC will fulfil both its responsibilities on its own continent and its responsibilities elsewhere in the world. The EC is keenly aware that these are complementary, not exclusive, developments."

The two-day meeting in the east Malaysian town of Kuching on the island of Borneo is expected to focus on economic issues and the environment.

Mahathir also called on Western environmental groups to stop campaigning against logging in

Malaysia, which he said was a matter of economic survival, accounting for five per cent of the country's export earnings and employing 162,000 people.

Malaysia, a leading exporter of tropical hardwood, has been accused of indiscriminately felling rain forests and unfairly treating tribal people who try to prevent logging.

Dozens of spear-wielding members of the nomadic Penan tribe have been detained briefly in Malaysia in recent years.

Malaysia was determined to resettle all jungle dwellers "into the mainstream of the nation's life," Mahathir said.

"There is nothing romantic about these helpless, half-starved and disease-ridden people," he said, "and we will make no apologies for endeavouring to uplift their living conditions."

"We do not intend to turn the Penan into 'human zoological specimens' to be gawped at by tourists and studied by anthropologists while the rest of the world passes them by," he stressed.

Diplomats said Malaysia had chosen to host the ASEAN-EC meeting in Sarawak to let European officials judge for themselves whether Malaysia was victimising the Penan, who number 9,000.

Austral skid spurs call for 'dollarisation' of economy

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — Argentina's battered currency, the austral skidded another 9.6 per cent against the U.S. dollar Thursday, stoking inflation and demands that the government protect workers' purchasing power.

Reynaldo Hermoso, secretary-general of the Argentine Federation of Chemical and Petrochemical Industrial Workers, demanded that union members be paid a monthly wage equivalent to \$100.

The austral, which lost 99 per cent of its value last year, traded at 3,500 per dollar Thursday, up from 3,170 the day before. The rate early last February was 17 to 1, with devaluation has come hyperinflation. The cost of living soared by 4,923 per cent in 1989, and by a staggering 8,164 per cent from February 1989 through last month.

The failure of wages to keep pace with price hikes has touched off strikes that Thursday disrupted courtrooms and outfields nationwide, and previously shut down bus lines, commuter trains and public hospitals.

Teachers are threatening to boycott classes when the school year resumes March 5, to accept a monthly wage of 180,000 australs (\$51) would be "the confirmation of a crime," union leader Alberto Nazari said.

The 180,000 australs, negotiated two weeks ago, and a value of \$150 in early January when the austral traded at 1,200 per dollar, and \$96 earlier this month when the austral traded at 1,870 to 1.

President Carlos Menem reportedly considered but rejected last December a plan to allow wages, prices and other economic variables to be set in dollars as well as the austral, Argentina's currency since June 1985 and its fourth monetary unit in the past 21 years.

Nevertheless, the government last month formally allowed stores to quote prices in dollars as well as australs. Banks may accept deposits in dollars, and a major source of investment finance are bonds denominated in dollars.

The hope of any "dollarisation" scheme is that wages and prices fluctuate in a rough parity, and the central bank's inability to print dollars would enforce monetary discipline.

Last month alone, the central bank printed about one trillion australs, pumping up the money supply by the one-third and contributing to inflation of 79 per cent. The rate for February is not expected to be much lower.

However, the "dollarisation" proposal faces a snag the government so far has been unable to overcome: The central bank simply lacks the dollars to back up all the australs in circulation, and pay wages in any currency except the austral.

Investors snap up Reader's Digest stock

NEW YORK (R) — Investors eagerly bought up shares of Reader's Digest Association Inc Thursday as they were offered to the public for the first time in the company's 68-year history.

The publishing company was listed as the most active issue on the New York Stock Exchange, with more than 7.6 million shares bought on the first day of trading.

The stock was at \$22 in late trading, compared with the initial offering price of \$20 a share.

Reader's Digest, touted as the world's most widely read magazine, said it would sell up to 25 million shares of the non-voting, class A stock in the offering.

At \$22 a share, the stock was selling at the high end of the price range originally predicted by the company.

The company was founded in 1922 with the idea that most magazine articles were too long. The flagship small-format monthly is filled with articles condensed

from other publications. It has worldwide circulation of 29 million in 15 languages, including 16.2 million in the United States alone.

In addition, the company is one of the world's most successful direct-marketing operations, selling books, videocassettes and record albums.

Since it was founded by Dewitt and Lila Wallace, Reader's Digest has built a reputation as a secretive, closely held company.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, February 15, 1990
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	French franc	Japanese yen (for 100)	115.3	116.5
U.S. dollar	659.0	665.0	Dutch guilder	346.1	351.6	
Pound Sterling	1115.4	1126.6	Swedish crown	107.4	108.5	
Deutschmark	392.3	396.2	Italian lira (for 100)	52.8	53.3	
Swiss franc	439.9	444.3	Belgian franc (for 10)	188.2	190.1	

Amman Financial Market weekly trading

Following is a summary of trading during last week and the previous week:

	Feb. 10-14	Feb. 3-7
Daily average	JD 1,459,108	JD 1,970,771
Total volume	JD 7,295,540	JD 9,853,854
Total shares	3,809,774	4,132,194
No. of contracts	4,250	4,798
Sectoral trading:		
Industrial	JD 3,452,278 (47.3%)	JD 3,876,820 (39.3%)
Financial	JD 2,122,938 (29.1%)	JD 3,821,017 (38.8%)
Service	(21%)	(19.5%)
Insurance	(2.6%)	(2.4%)
Share price index	141.0	144.1
No. of companies	67	73
Price movement (rise)	27	13
(decline)	30	48
(stable)	10	12

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.6860/70	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.2015/25	Canadian dollar
	1.6925/32	Deutschmarks
	1.9075/85	Dutch guilders
	1.5042/52	Swiss francs
	35.33/40	Belgian francs
	5.7520/70	French francs
	1256/1257	Italian lire
	144.70/80	Japanese yen
	6.1600/2000	Swedish crowns
	6.5155/605	Norwegian crowns
	6.5280/330	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	415.10/415.60	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Shares closed slightly lower despite confidence that the pro-business Liberal Democratic Party will win Sunday's election. The Nikkei slipped 11.67 points to 37,460.32.

HONG KONG — Prices closed sharply higher although profit-taking erased some of the early gains. The Hang Seng index closed 29.21 points higher at 2,939.25.

SINGAPORE — The market ended firmer on speculative buying and bargain-hunting. The Straits Times industrial index rose 5.42 to end at 1,584.77.

BOMBAY — Share prices were hit by profit-taking after an early rally, sparked by an official report showing a rise in Indian exports, to finish mixed in heavy trading. The Bombay stock exchange index slipped 0.09 point to 689.98.

FRANKFURT — Renewed foreign demand for West German shares pushed prices higher across the board as optimism about West German business prospects continued. The 30-share DAX index rose 42.70 points to end at 1,893.66, an increase of 2.3 per cent.

ZURICH — Swiss shares closed firmer in lively trading, with brokers saying buying sentiment late in the session was supported by Thursday's firm New York close and rising prices in Frankfurt. The all-share SPI index rose 6.3 to 1,127.5.

LONDON — Share prices retreated from the day's highs mainly in response to a mixed opening in New York, where news the U.S. trade deficit had narrowed more than expected in December had limited initial impact. The FTSE index reached a session high of 2,334.4 but by 1615 GMT it was at 2,325.8, up 12.0.

NEW YORK — Wall Street stocks strengthened on a report investors saw as generally favourable U.S. economic data reported earlier by the U.S. government. The Dow Jones industrial average rose eight points to about 2,657 in late-morning trading.

THE BETTER HALF.

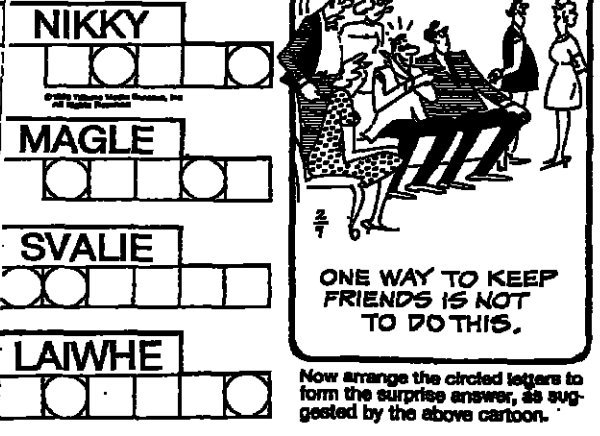
By Harris



"I promised Harriet she'd never see me with another cigarette in my hand."

JUMBLE.

Scramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form our ordinary words.



Answer here: "O O O O" THEM "O O O O" (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SHYLY ELDER MUFFLE AUTHOR
Answer: They said she was beautiful but not quite this — "ALL THERE"

Peanuts



Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



Lendl, McEnroe advance into Skydome quarterfinals

TORONTO (AP) — Ivan Lendl and John McEnroe stayed on course for a semifinal showdown, advancing to the quarterfinals of the Skydome tennis tournament with straight set victories.

Lendl late Thursday defeated Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands 7-5, 6-2 after demanding and getting a new net judge. The referee warned Lendl for arguing a net call during the first set, but the net judge made his point and the net judge was replaced.

"I can't stand incompetence and mediocrity," said Lendl, who had 13 aces.

McEnroe, seeded third, eliminated practice partner Lief Shiras 6-4, 6-3.

"We had a couple of words under our breath at each other but we kept it light-hearted," said McEnroe. "He tried to keep me off balance but I think I played him well."

The third through sixth seeds also advanced to the quarterfinals. Third-seeded Brad Gilbert defeated Milan Srejber of Czechoslovakia 6-2, 6-2 and number four Andre Krickorian, playing with a pulled groin, defeated John Fitzgerald of Australia 6-2, 6-2.

Jay Berger, the fifth seed, eliminated Richey Reneberg 6-4, 7-5 (6-5) and number six Tim Mayotte knocked off Jorge Lozano of Mexico 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.

South African Kevin Carren and Peter Korde of Czechoslovakia also advanced.

Navratilova into quarterfinals

CHICAGO (R) — Top seed Martina Navratilova conducted a comprehensive tennis clinic at the expense of fellow American Anne White at the \$500,000 Chicago tennis tournament Thursday.

Navratilova barely had time to work up a sweat as she dispatched White 6-0, 6-0 in just 40 minutes to advance to the quarterfinals.

Navratilova, who dropped just 11 points in the first set and 14 in the second, said she came into the match with the intention of working on various parts of her game.

"I've been working with Billy Jean King on so many things," said Navratilova. "I worked on every facet of my game tonight I could, ground strokes, volleys, serves and footwork."

White admitted that she would not have bet against Navratilova coming into the match.

"I have to be a realist," said White smiling. "On my very best day and on Martina's worst, I couldn't beat her. She'd have to break her arm and default for me to have a chance." Local teen Linda Harvey-Wild proved that her first round upset of French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain was no fluke by eliminating Australian Nicole Provis 6-4, 6-4.

"I didn't play as well as I did against Arantxa," said Harvey-Wild, who is playing in her first tournament as a professional.

"I feel like I am in the comfort zone playing at home in front of my friends," said the 19-year-old, who has become the darling of Chicago tennis fans.

Harvey-Wild's will try to keep her upset string going when she takes on eighth-seeded fellow American Pam Shriver in the quarterfinals.

Samaranch ends official visit

IOC to finance an Olympic library and museum in Jordan

By Serene Hales
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and Sheikh Fahd Al Ahmad Al Sabah, president of the Asian Olympic Council, left Amman Friday after a three-day visit during which it was agreed that the IOC would finance an Olympic library and museum in Jordan.

Samaranch also promised to study prospects for IOC financing for an Olympic academy in the Kingdom, according to Minister of Youth Ibrahim Ghalebshah.

In a press conference he and Sheikh Fahd held Thursday evening, Samaranch described the outcome of his visit to Jordan as positive and fruitful and contributed to increased cooperation between the IOC and the Kingdom. Samaranch said Jordan was the 161st member of the IOC he visited after becoming president of the committee nine years ago.

The focus during the press

conference was more on international sporting issues which have heavy political undertones. These included the international sports boycott of South Africa and its expulsion from the IOC and Olympic Games since 1970.

Asked whether the recent reforms carried out by the white minority regime in South Africa encouraged the IOC to reconsider the membership status of the country and allow it to participate in the 1992 Olympics, Samaranch said it was too early to say anything.

"Something is moving in South Africa and we are studying what is happening there very carefully," he said.

However, he announced that he planned to meet with an Olympic committee on apartheid in Kuwait Monday to discuss South Africa.

"The Olympic movement will always be on the side of the African countries because the solution for this problem must come from South Africa," he said.

Asked why such measures were not taken against Israel, which is internationally seen as practising racial policies similar to South Africa's apartheid, Samaranch said: "The difference is that Israel is a member of all the international (sports) organisations and this is not the case with South Africa."

On moves towards reunification of the two Germanys and possibilities that a single German team could attend the next Olympics, Samaranch said the IOC did not find any problem with such an eventuality. The IOC would agree to such a request if made, he said.

"If the Germans agree between themselves, we're ready to receive the request as we have nothing against that," he said.

Barcelona, Spain. Prince Hassan reviewed with the two officials IOC programmes and activities and discussed with them programmes of the Jordanian Olympic Committee, which is chaired by the Crown Prince.

Samaranch extended to the Prince a formal invitation to attend the opening ceremony of the 1992 Olympics.

The IOC chief was presented with the Jordanian Olympic Committee's shield in acknowledgement of his support for sports activities in Jordan.

Samaranch and Fahd left Friday for Iran as part of a tour which will also include Iraq, Bahrain and Kuwait.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TARIAM HIRSH
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READING THE CARDS

Both vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ A 10 9 6 2
♥ A J 9
♦ J 2
♣ J 6 4

EAST
♠ 5 4
♥ Q 8 7
♦ A Q 10 6 4
♣ A 10 9

SOUTH
♠ K Q J 8 7
♥ K 10
♦ K 3
♣ K 5 2

The bidding:
West North East South
Pass Pass Pass 1 ♠
Pass 4 ♠ Pass Pass
Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♣.

Dear Charlie:
At the moment I am in Italy filming a thriller. It brings to mind how similar are the tasks that face a dealer and a detective. Each must ferret out the clues that lead to the solution of the problem at hand.

Which reminds me of this hand I played a couple of years ago at the annual tournament in Crans-sur-Sierre. My team was leading the competition and it came up halfway through a match against our closest challengers. My partner's passed-hand raise to four spades was a trifle aggressive, but then you know that Paul Chernik is never shy in the bidding.

West led a diamond. East won the ace and returned the queen. My problem was to avoid losing three club tricks. I drew trumps in two rounds and, since even a winning finesse in hearts would not provide a solution, I eliminated hearts by ruffing the third round.

I now knew East had started with ace-queen of diamonds and queen of hearts. Had he held the ace of clubs as well, he would surely have opened the bidding. I was about to lead a low club to the jack when it dawned on me that there was something unusual about the defense. If East held nothing in clubs, why didn't he start to that suit at trick two? Ergo, he had to have a holding that made a club lead unattractive—the queen.

So I led a low club from hand and ducked! I did not mind who won. Actually, East won the nine and returned the ten, but I had no problem in letting that run to the jack and thereby hold my club losses to two tricks.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17, 1990
By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You can use today to wind-up an old-year point that has followed you into the New Year. An agreeable note that is quick, responsive and logical will hold the clue to this arrangement.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get off alone with family and find out just what they expect of you. Adding your attachment with a problem will bring affectionate returns.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can add to your abundance now through your own creative skills. Take your family out to amusing recreations on the town and be happy.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Home problems are best worked out now in a very common sense manner. Adopting a cooperative attitude will mean much to your attachment now.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Entertain at home those you want to be much closer to in the future. A soft work spoken at your loved one could bring long-time positive results.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can discuss financial conditions with friends who understand your position. Full scope discussion of the future with your attachment will be productive now.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Confusion at home can be avoided by more consideration being shown. Carry through with long time plans made with your attachment.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get off alone with a man you want to add in a recreational activity. You can have a sparkling time enjoying your close attachment.

Holyfield ready to fight Douglas

NEW YORK (R) — Evander Holyfield, number one contender for the world heavyweight boxing title, is ready to fight newly-crowned champion James "Buster" Douglas despite demands by dethroned Mike Tyson for a rematch, his manager said Thursday.

Holyfield had been prepared to step aside to allow a Tyson-Douglas rematch in June under an agreement promising him a fight with the winner, but the Douglas camp has since said that the new champion might not fight again until September.

Holyfield's manager Dan Duva said in a statement that a delay in the next Douglas fight had altered the picture and Holyfield was now ready to face the champion within 120 days, as ordered by the World Boxing Association (WBA).

"Evander Holyfield has been

the number one heavyweight contender for over a year now," Duva said. "He was good enough to step aside and allow Tyson to fight Douglas last week, with the agreement he would fight the winner. He even considered allowing them to fight again in June before getting his shot."

"But if Douglas wants to wait until September to fight again, then Holyfield has no choice but to assert his rights as the number one contender and demand his shot at the title next, within the time frame set by the WBA."

Douglas, a heavy underdog, stunned the boxing world Sunday when he knocked out the previously undefeated Tyson in Tokyo in the 10th round. However, the WBA and World Boxing Council initially withheld recognition of Douglas to investigate whether he benefited from a long count after being knocked

down in the eighth round.

Promoter Don King, who initially protested against the result, later accepted it but immediately began working on plans for a rematch.

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THE Daily Crossword by Donald S. Grant

ACROSS

- Harper's Ferry action
- Land or sea and
- A few
- A Lancaster
- Panama city
- US naturalist
- Like tape
- A Klumper
- Beesmer product
- Stress with difficulty
- India attire
- Meet a poker bet
- Have being
- Cups
- Central point
- Flimsy drupe
- Constellation
- Arthur of TV
- Ms. Thompson
- "Victory belongs to the —"
- (Napoleonic) Hated hotel
- Eng. river
- Nora's dog
- Beams
- Tennis serves
- Cost scuffle
- Two — kind
- Exclamation
- Spots
- Loveingly
- A2 waterway
- Craving
- St. Nicolas
- Vir and her
- Pleated
- Type size
- Wild duster
- Theft of yore
- Mended a shoe
- Adm. Zumiwalt

DOWN

- Races the engine
- Landed
- Capri e.g.
- Valleys
- Sch. subj.
- Deem
- Thanks —!
- Deceased
- Followed
- Base of cities
- Bizarre
- Bishop's hat
- Wear
- gradually
- Thick
- Wishes
- Garnet
- Parent
- Grand poetry
- Cashmere
- native
- Atteller item
- gave
- Forces
- Division word
- Mild cost
- Comic Richard
- Derouane scarily
- I forbid: Lat.
- Kent and Cornwall
- Fly high
- Indian
- Comic Richard
- Misera
- Molding
- Accumulate
- Ocean
- phenomenon
- early film
- Leaves port
- Esau
- Regarding
- Actor Betty

Yesterday's Puzzle Solver:

ACROSS

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- Fly high
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- early film
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- Regarding
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Qualified candidates are requested to submit resume/curriculum vitae of their educational and work experience no later than March 15, 1990 to:

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Jordan Institute of Management/Industrial Development Bank
PO Box 7976, Amman, Jordan
Phone: 649040 Fax: 649041

Cinema Tel: 625155

RAINBOW

THE PICK UP ARTIST

Performances: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30

Cinema Tel: 677420

CONCORD

LICENCE TO KILL

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema Tel: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

MY TUTOR

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema Tel: 675571

NJOUM

Michel Kilton
star of Batman in
BEETLE JUICE

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Soviets to start pullout from Czechoslovakia on Feb. 26

PRAGUE (Agencies) — Soviet troops will start leaving Czechoslovakia in 10 days, the Communist Party trade union daily Prace said Friday.

The Soviet Union has 75,000 troops and some dependants stationed in Czechoslovakia following a Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion in August 1968 which ended the Prague Spring liberalisation era under Alexander Dubcek.

The paper said the military pullout would start Feb. 26 and a substantial part of the Russian military force would be withdrawn by May 31.

Prace said the pullout date was agreed at a meeting of Czechoslovak and Soviet experts who started negotiating the timetable and technical details of a troop withdrawal last month.

For many Czechoslovaks now led by a reformist government, the Soviet officers and soldiers are no longer welcome.

Thousands of citizens have demonstrated in recent weeks to demand that the Soviet troops leave at once. In one protest 30,000 massed in Prague shouting "Ivan, go home."

The hardline Communist leaders who invited Warsaw Pact troops to throttle the Dubcek-era reforms surrendered power last November after huge street protests.

Czechoslovakia was the first Warsaw Pact state occupied by Soviet forces to open talks on their withdrawal.

It flatly told Moscow it wanted the first contingent to go before free elections in June and the rest by the end of the year.

Gen. Anton Slimak, Czechoslovak chief of staff, initially said the Soviet withdrawal would begin next week in Bruntal, 260 kilometres east of Prague, the Czechoslovak news agency CTK reported.

Later, however, CTK said Soviet and Czechoslovak delegations meeting in Prague agreed that the pullout would begin on Feb. 26, the day President Vaclav Havel begins his visit to Moscow.

As they approach their first free elections in more than 40 years, Hungary and Czechoslovakia view the removal of Soviet forces as a symbolic affirmation of independence.

Havel indicated Tuesday that a personal letter he received from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev might help resolve the question of how soon all 73,500 Red Army soldiers would be out of Czechoslovakia, he did not elaborate.

Talks on the withdrawal began in Prague in January. Foreign Ministry spokesman Lubos Dobrovsky told journalists Tuesday an agreement on a deadline could be reached by Sunday, which would allow Havel to sign it when he goes to Moscow.

Magyar Nemzet, a Hungarian daily, quoted Foreign Ministry official Ferenc Somotyi as saying Hungary could "count on working out the agreement within a month."

Czechoslovakia has insisted that the Soviets withdraw regardless of the results of East-West

talks in Vienna on reducing conventional forces in Europe, but Hungary has not.

Officials appear confident of a Vienna agreement this year, now that the Soviets have accepted U.S. President George Bush's proposal to reduce the number of U.S. and Soviet soldiers in Central Europe to 195,000 on each side, while allowing the United States to keep 30,000 troops in outlying countries.

Hungary wants all 50,000 Soviet soldiers stationed on its territory to depart by early 1991, but Somotyi said the Kremlin was concerned about transportation and facilities for the returning soldiers.

"We have to take into account our negotiating partner's position," he was quoted as saying.

Slimak said withdrawal from Czechoslovakia could not be completed by the end of 1990 for technical and social reasons.

Both governments have acknowledged that a bottleneck might result from withdrawing large numbers of soldiers from neighbouring countries simultaneously through one Soviet border point, where trains would have to be changed because of different track widths.

Soviet officials also cite a lack of housing for most of the 16,000 families of Soviet soldiers and civilian workers based in Czechoslovakia, Slimak said.

A preliminary agreement indicates about 35 per cent of the soldiers will be withdrawn by the end of May, along with 40 per cent of the tanks, 30 per cent of other combat vehicles and nearly one-third of helicopters and artillery, he said.



Nujoma elected 1st Namibian president

WINDHOEK, Namibia (AP) — Sam Nujoma, leader of the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) for 30 years, was elected Namibia's first president Friday in preparation for the territory's independence on March 21.

The 72-member constituent assembly unanimously elected Nujoma, who helped found SWAPO in 1960 and led it through a 23-year bush war against South African rule of Namibia, formerly called South-West Africa.

"On behalf of the Namibian people and myself I want to express my sincere appreciation for the trust and honour you have bestowed upon me," Nujoma told the assembly. "I will execute my duties in conformity to the letter and the spirit of the constitution."

South Africa, which has ruled Namibia since 1915, has agreed to grant the territory independence under a regional peace accord signed in 1988 with Angola and Cuba.

More than 6,000 United Nations military and civilian personnel have been monitoring the transition to independence, which began last April.

SWAPO won 41 assembly seats in elections last November and six other parties captured the remaining 31 spots.

Despite a hard-fought election and sharp ideological differences, the parties quickly worked out a democratic, Western-style constitution that has won virtually unanimous support. Also, Nujoma has named whites, businessmen and opposition party members to his cabinet in a bid to heal the deep divisions caused by the long war.

Nujoma, 60, has little formal education, but is considered a shrewd, instinctive politician who has maintained the leadership of his organisation despite several challenges over the years.

He helped found the Ovambo Land People's Organisation, the forerunner to SWAPO, in the late 1950s. He went into exile in 1959 and was named president of SWAPO in 1960, when it was formed.

Under his leadership, the movement was recognised by the United Nations as the "sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people" although the territory had dozens of political parties.

Nujoma helped launch SWAPO's guerrilla war in 1966 and travelled widely during his years in exile, particularly to Communist and Third World countries.

4 leaders forge 'anti-drug cartel'

CARTAGENA, Colombia (AP) — The presidents of the United States and three cocaine-producing nations of South America have forged an agreement on a new drug-fighting strategy during a tense summit under an air, sea and land security shield.

U.S. President George Bush boasted that the new pact he had signed Thursday with Presidents Virgilio Barco of Colombia, Alan Garcia of Peru and Jaime Paz Zamora of Bolivia would create the world's "first anti-drug cartel."

A joint communique signed by the four presidents apparently ruled out the use of U.S. military forces in the Andean region. "Each country may involve its armed forces in this fight within its own national territory," the document said.

In their meeting, they steered away from some of the most controversial drug initiatives, such as the idea of a naval cordon off Colombia, and chose instead to deal in broader themes. That helped keep harmony among the sometimes differing leaders.

Extraordinary security precautions were taken to protect the four leaders: 5,000 uniformed

troops guarded the proceedings, battleships presented an imposing force off shore and helicopter gunships hovered nearby.

But Colombian guerrillas made their own point, abducting a U.S. priest in Cali, the third U.S. citizen taken prisoner by the rebels this week.

A small bomb also exploded Thursday morning, seven kilometres from Barranquilla airport, damaging a voltage regulator of a line that fed the air conditioning of the airport where Bush landed two hours later.

Bush pledged that the United States would step up its efforts to cut down on drug use and lower demand for the cocaine produced in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru. The three Latin presidents had come to the summit complaining that the United States had not done enough to curtail demand.

Back in Washington, D.C. federal prosecutors sent their own message — announcing the indictment of Mayor Marion Barry on eight counts of perjury and possession of a controlled substance, cocaine.

"Every tactic and every weapon pales into insignificance compared to the need to reduce

demand," Barco said. "The only law that the narco-terrorists do not break is the law of supply and demand."

Zamora said the leaders had talked about creating an "alternate economy" so the peasants of the coca-growing and processing nations would not be dependent on the crop for their livelihoods. After the meetings, he said, "we understand the true magnitude of the problem and how to face it."

Bush returned to Washington Thursday night on Air Force One, the U.S. presidential plane, without incident.

At the end of the summit, Garcia, who once threatened to boycott the meeting to protest the U.S. invasion of Panama, spoke of the need for a vigorous crop substitution programme. "What has changed here is concepts, so that we never go back — a better relationship between Latin America and the United States," he said.

Barco said, "no," when asked if Colombia would be willing to have U.S. naval forces patrolling in international waters off Colombia's coast to keep track of drug shipments. "It is not necessary," he said.

Albanians stage fresh protests in Kosovo

BEGRAD (R) — Hundreds of ethnic Albanians staged fresh protests Friday in Yugoslavia's southern province of Kosovo, where 29 people have been killed in riots over the past month, Tanjug news agency reported.

It said some 500 ethnic Albanians marched through Nivna Mitrovica towards the town's high school and called for pupils to join them.

The past month's strife has been the worst surge of violence in Yugoslavia since Albanians rioted last March against curbs on the autonomy of Kosovo, part of the country's biggest republic, Serbia.

Ethnic Albanians, who make up 90 per cent of Kosovo's population, demand greater regional autonomy and the resignation of the province's Serbian-controlled leaders.

The daily newspaper Borba said that students at Pristina University pledged Thursday to boycott classes until their demands for the lifting of emergency police measures and the release of political prisoners were met.

On Thursday, some 7,000 ethnic Albanians took to the streets in silent marches in two Kosovo towns.

"It is evident that the situation in Kosovo has deteriorated after a brief calm," Tanjug said Friday.

A joint statement by opposition groups appealed to the Albanians to "avoid any form of manifestation which might serve as justification for renewed repression."

Last month's riots were sparked when police broke up a protest in Pristina, the regional capital, on Jan. 24 by 40,000 ethnic Albanians.

The conflict has spilled over the province's boundaries and polarised national leaders already bitterly divided over Yugoslavia's future.

U.K., Argentina restore ties

LONDON (AP) — Britain and Argentina have welcomed the agreement to restore diplomatic ties severed nearly eight years ago by the Falklands War, but their dispute over ownership of the British-ruled islands goes on.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said in Sky Television Thursday night that the agreement reached by officials of the two countries in Madrid earlier in the day was a very good one.

"It underlines the fact that we have no quarrel with Argentina and this has been achieved without any sacrifice of (British) sovereignty," over the islands, he said.

But President Carlos Menem at a news conference in Buenos Aires Thursday repeated Argentina's claim over the South Atlantic islands 480 kilometres off his country's coast.

Argentine Foreign Minister Domingo Cavallo said the deal "means passing from a state of war to a state of peace."

At the same time, Menem moved quickly to finish the process of normalising relations by announcing that career diplomat Mario Campora, who is currently deputy foreign minister, would be named the new ambassador to Britain.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has consistently

refused to discuss Falklands sovereignty with Argentina. In return, Argentina refused until Thursday to say it regarded hostilities with Britain in the South Atlantic to be ended.

United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said: "I very much welcome the decision... to re-establish diplomatic relations. Then immediately creates an atmosphere of confidence."

Talks between British and Argentine officials on resuming normal relations began last August after Menem said Argentina would not raise its claim to Falklands sovereignty at them.

Talks in Bern, Switzerland, in July 1984 foundered over Argentina's insistence on raising the sovereignty issue in the face of Britain's refusal to discuss it.

The Falklands war erupted after Argentine forces invaded the islands on April 2, 1982. Britain sent a military task force, which recaptured them after a 74-day war. The fighting claimed the lives of 712 Argentines, 255 Britons and three islanders.

Argentina claims the islands, which it calls the Malvinas, are part of its Spanish colonial heritage and says Britain stole them. Britain denies this. It has ruled them as a colony since 1833.

A key to the Madrid deal was

Britain's agreement to lift its 240 kilometre-radius military protection zone around the islands, from which Argentine warships and planes were excluded.

The zone was patrolled by British submarines, ships and planes, while the islands themselves are guarded by 2,000 British troops.

Sir Crispin Tickell, the diplomat who led the British team in Madrid, said: "The zone is being lifted (from March 31)... what we have done instead is to create security areas of importance to both countries."

The British Foreign Office said Thursday night that the two nations had agreed to inform one another about movements of their warships and military aircraft in key areas of the south Atlantic and give notice of large military exercises.

Under the deal, Argentine warships wishing to come within 80 kilometres of the islands and Argentine warplanes wishing to come within 110 kilometres will have to give 48 hours notice.

Menem said the Madrid deal opened up possibilities for Argentina, a major meat exporter. "Aside from having eliminated... the possibilities of an armed conflict, it opens for us wide possibilities in... the European Economic Community," of which Britain is a member, he said.

EC to hold special summit on German unity

BRUSSELS (R) — European Community (EC) governments have decided to hold a special summit in Dublin in early April to discuss the implications of German unity, diplomats said Friday.

They said a formal announcement with the date was expected later this afternoon from the Irish government, which currently holds the EC's rotating presidency.

The diplomats said the meeting of the 12 EC leaders would probably be more substantial than their special "Saturday night summit" in Paris last November, when they reviewed the changes sweeping Eastern Europe, in talks over dinner.

EC foreign ministers are already scheduled to hold a regular meeting in Luxembourg on

April 2 and the diplomats said that session could be used to prepare a summit a week or so later.

European Commission President Jacques Delors, who also attends such summits, was the first to speak publicly about the idea this week although Irish officials had already been considering calling the special meeting.

Hawke calls snap elections

CANBERRA (R) — Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, in power since 1983, said Friday the snap election he called for March 24 was the most important in 40 years.

"It's the most important election since 1949 because I deeply believe that the decision in this election will essentially determine the sort of character of the nation that we're going to enter the 21st century with," Hawke told a news conference soon after announcing the election date.

Labour leads the Liberal National Party Coalition by around three percentage points in latest opinion polls. The opposition coalition needs only a 2.6 per cent swing nationally to gain power.

Victory at the poll would give Labour, which has a majority of 22 seats in the 148-seat House of Representatives, the Australian lower house, a record fourth consecutive term of office.

Hawke said the election would be close but said Australia's 11 million voters should consider the achievements of his Labour Party

over the past seven years when casting their ballots.

"I'm not in any sense complacent or cocky about this campaign... it's going to be a tight campaign and we're going to have to try hard, work hard," he said. "I think the conditions are possibly there for an improvement in our majority."

"The essential question is whether we will continue together towards the achievement of a fair society, an increasingly efficient and competitive Australian economy and all that within a healthy environment."

"Or whether we're going to turn the clock back to what were, without question, the days of entrenched privilege, of lost opportunities and of environmental degradation."

Hawke, already Labour's longest-serving prime minister, had to call an election by May 12, the end of his three-year term.

Analysts say he was persuaded to move early because of continued dissension in opposition ranks and signs that record home-

loan rates, a major cause of dissatisfaction among voters, were set to fall.

"There is a truth of Australian politics which has been reflected over a long period of time that if you can't govern yourselves, you can't govern the country," he said.

In-fighting was a major cause of the opposition coalition's defeat in the last election, in 1987. Liberal leader John Howard was deposed in May, 1989, by Andrew Peacock, who headed the party unsuccessfully into the 1984 election.

But the Liberal Party is still struggling to project itself as united while Peacock, who sacked a senior cabinet member Wednesday for discussing the possibility of election defeat, is seen by voters as lacking credibility and charisma.

A Morgan Gallup opinion poll earlier this month said only 26 per cent of those polled thought Peacock would make a good prime minister, while 60 per cent thought Hawke was the right man for the job.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Honecker admits responsibility for crisis

EAST BERLIN (AP) — Ousted Communist chief Erich Honecker has repeated his admission of responsibility for the East German crisis, according to a statement on East German TV. In the Thursday night statement, Honecker also admitted that national municipal elections last year were manipulated. Outrage over the elections was a major factor in the peaceful popular uprising that led to Honecker's ouster Oct. 18. The 77-year-old, ailing former leader has been accused of widespread corruption during his 18-year rule and faces trial next month for high treason. Rainer Eppelmann of Democratic Awakening, one of eight opposition officials added to Communist Premier Hans Modrow's government on Feb. 5, read the following Honecker declaration on TV. "According to my earlier declarations, I admit being politically responsible for the crisis in which the state and the people of... (East Germany) are suffering now. This extends to the circumstances that led eventually to the manipulation of the election results on May 7, 1989. At the same time, I want to stress that I never in my life made political decisions out of egoistic motives and that I feel free of any guilt in a juridical sense."

Burma detains 25 election candidates

BANGKOK (AP) — Burma's military rulers have detained at least 25 opposition parliamentary candidates and hundreds of other dissidents in advance of promised elections, Western diplomats in Rangoon said Friday. All 25 candidates had been held since Feb. 8. Most are members of the leading opposition group, the National League for Democracy, according to the diplomats, who spoke on condition of anonymity. They said the candidates were all running in the May 27 election, which will be the first multi-party vote since 1960. It was not clear for how long the candidates would be detained, or what charges they faced, if any, said the diplomats, reached by telephone from Bangkok. All the detained candidates were running for office in Rangoon. The diplomats said several hundred other dissidents had been detained since November, including many young supporters of the National League.

Cheney visits frontline troops in Korea

SEOUL (AP) — U.S. Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney flew by helicopter over the heavily fortified border between North and South Korea Friday and lunched with combat-ready American troops to discuss cutbacks in U.S. forces. Morning fog in the rugged terrain along the demilitarised zone delayed Cheney's helicopter tour, but the weather improved by noon and he flew 56 kilometres northeast of Seoul to Camp Casey, headquarters of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division. Cheney flew dozens of tanks, bunkers and guard posts covered with camouflage, buildings painted in speckled olive-drab and brown, and soldiers in full-dress battle fatigues, the standard uniform for combat-ready troops along the border between North Korea and the South.

Bomb kills New York undercover officer

PATCHOGUE, New York (AP) — A bomb planted in an unmarked police car exploded Thursday, killing an undercover narcotics detective in front of his home, officials said. Dennis Wustenhoff, 41, died at Stony Brook University Medical Centre nearly three hours after he was killed just after noon, said hospital spokeswoman Maxine Simpson. "This was probably an assassination and job-connected," said Suffolk County Police Commissioner Daniel Guido. "But we don't know whether it was revenge or related to a current case Wustenhoff was working on." The bomb blew out the entire front part of the car, Guido said.

Queen Elizabeth heads home

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, flew out of New Zealand Friday after a 16-day visit. Governor General Sir Paul Reeves, Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer and a number of cabinet ministers were among those who gathered on the tarmac at Christchurch Airport to bid farewell to the royal couple. Before entering the British Airways plane for the journey to London, the queen, dressed in royal blue, turned and waved to a small crowd lining the airport viewing deck.

Polls predict high turnout, LDP victory in Japanese elections

TOKYO (AP) — Unusually high voter turnout is expected in Japan's parliamentary election this weekend, with more polls Friday showing the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) likely to stay in power.

Less than two days before the ballot, Japanese media predicted an 80-93 per cent voter turnout in Sunday's election for representatives to parliament's powerful Lower House.

The high voter interest reflects the importance of the election, which could drive the Liberal Democrats from their 34-year hold on power.

Last July the Liberal Democrats lost control of the less powerful Upper House in the wake of the imposition of an unpopular new sales tax and the influence-buying Recruit scandal, named after the firm at the centre of the controversy.

The newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun said Friday its poll showed that "the people's concern over the Recruit scandal and the consumption tax has weakened while concern over basic standard-of-living issues such as land, housing, prices and welfare has increased."

A survey of Kyodo News Service released Friday showed the conservative governing party winning 46.7 per cent of the vote and

the Japan Socialist Party, the no. 1 opposition group, taking 23.8 per cent. The Liberal Democrats' share increased by 1.5 per cent from a Kyodo poll taken before parliamentary elections in 1986, while the Socialist registered 13.2 per cent support at that time.

Other media polls during the week have given the Liberal Democrats 259-285 seats in the 512-seat Lower House, down from their current 295, and the Socialist 120-140 seats, up from their current 85.

A party need a minimum of 257 seats for a simple majority in the chamber, which selects the prime minister and has the power to adopt the national budget and treaties without approval of the Upper House, which can block legislation on other issues.

In all the surveys, 30-40 per cent of the voters polled remained uncommitted to any candidate, leaving open the possibility of a defeat for the governing party.

Yomiuri, Japan's largest newspaper, said 80 per cent of those they surveyed expected to. Voter turnout was 71 per cent in the 1986 balloting and 65 per cent in the Upper House election last year. No margins of error were available for the polls.

A high voter turnout is expected to help the Liberal Democrats. But a victory by them would not mean they could carry on the business of government unhindered.

"Important bills submitted by the government-LDP will come to naught if they are rejected by the combined opposition in the upper chamber," political analyst Kenzo Uchida wrote Friday in the Japan Times. "The dispute will continue between the ruling and opposition parties over the consumption tax, which is the biggest immediate issue."

Opposition parties led by the Socialists are calling for an end to the 3 per cent sales tax instituted last April and say they will pass legislation in the Upper House to abolish the levy.

The opposition also is calling for deep political reforms in the wake of the Liberal Democrats' heavy involvement in the Recruit scandal, in which many LDP politicians and bureaucrats with close links to the LDP profited from purchases of out-rate shares from a subsidiary of Recruit Co..

Noboru Takeshita resigned as prime minister last June over his links to the scandal, and his successor, Sosuke Uno, stepped down after the July election loss.

COLUMN

Mandela to get a Mercedes car

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Mercedes Benz workers have got permission to build Nelson Mandela a luxury saloon car — painted red — to show their admiration for the freed South African black leader. Mercedes Benz South Africa, a subsidiary of West Germany's car maker Daimler Benz AG, has said it had agreed to a demand by the National Union of Metalworkers that a red car be assembled to "acknowledge the pride and esteem in which the majority of its employees hold Nelson Mandela." The union said the move was subject to the approval of anti-apartheid activists coordinating Mandela's activities.

Jacuzzi gives huge lovebite

STOCKHOLM (R) — A Swedish woman who got stuck in a Jacuzzi's suction system was taken to hospital — with back pains and a huge "lovebite" on her bottom. Physician Jan Wellander said the shocked woman had not been able to break loose from the suction system in the public jacuzzi until it was turned off. He said the jacuzzi had given her a suction mark measuring 20 by 30 centimetres. He urged other jacuzzi bathers to be careful. "It was the biggest lovebite I've ever seen," he said.

Stripper-politician sentenced to jail

TAIPEI (R) — Hsu Shao-Tan, Taiwan's stripper-turned-politician, was sentenced to three months in prison for making a pornographic movie, court officials said. Under Taiwan law, sentences of under six months can be settled by paying a fine — amounting in Hsu's case to only 8,100 Taiwan dollars (\$310) — instead of serving the time. Hsu did not appear in court for the sentencing. She admitted appearing in the movie but said the nude scenes were not of her body. Hsu narrowly lost a race for a seat in parliament in December elections.

S. Korean officials turn Cupid

SEOUL (R) — South Korean rural officials have turned Cupid, offering a 100,000 won (\$145) reward to matchmakers finding wives for lonely farmers. "There are at least 100 unmarried farmers aged over 30 here. It is extremely difficult for them to find their wives in this rural area," Park Choon-Ja, an official at the Namwon county office said Tuesday. A mass exodus of young women from the countryside, lured by the relative ease of city life, means there are few marriageable girls left behind for men who stay down on the farm. "There is only one young woman for every 10 old bachelors in this area. Despite our efforts to help the old bachelors, the marriage problem is getting worse," Park said.

Here comes Havel on his scooter

PRAGUE (R) — Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel says he uses a child's scooter to speed his way through the corridors of power. The 53-year-old head of state told reporters an organisation called the committee for a merrier presence gave him the scooter after hearing of the huge offices and long corridors he had to negotiate in Prague's Hradcany Castle. Havel admitted he had occasionally wheeled his way through the castle since his appointment seven weeks ago to avoid being late for meetings.

Global weather

(major world cities)

	MIN.	°C	°F	MAX.	Weather
AMSTERDAM	02	36	93	43	Clear
ATHENS	09	48	118	81	Clear
BAHRAIN	18	61	20	68	Cloudy
BANGKOK	28	72	32	90	Clear
BUENOS AIRES	18	64	25	77	Clear
CAIRO	11	52	19	68	Clear
CHICAGO	03	27	00	32	Cloudy
COPENHAGEN	03	27	00	37	Cloudy
FRANKFURT	03	27	00	37	Cloudy
GENEVA	08	46	13	55	Rain
HONG KONG	18	64	21	70	Cloudy
ISTANBUL	04	39	08	46	Rain
LONDON	04	39	08	50	Cloudy
LOS ANGELES	04	39	13	56	Cloudy
MADRID	06	43	10	64	Clear
MELBOURNE	14	57	28	82	Cloudy
MONTREAL	-08	18	01	34	Snow
MOSCOW	01	32	00	34	Clear
NEW DELHI	09	49	21	70	Clear
NEW YORK	01	34	04	39	Clear
PARIS	03	37	09	48	Cloudy
ROME	02	36	19	68	Clear
SYDNEY	04	39	10	72	Clear
TOKYO	05	41	07	45	Rain
VIENNA	02	38	04	38	Rain

X = Indicates missing information.